A U M

That pure, great light which is radiant; that great glory; that verily which the gods worship; that by means of which the sun shines forth—that eternal divine being is perceived by devotees. The real and the unreal have both the same real entity as their basis. The being who is the inner Self, is not seen, being placed in the heart. Meditating on him, a wise man remains placid.

# THEOSOPHY

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*"I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."*
—*Secret Doctrine,* I. xlvi (o. e.).

## MASTERS AND THEIR MESSAGE

### SOME CHAPTERS FROM THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY.

H. P. BLAVATSKY died in 1891, William Q. Judge in 1896, and Col. Henry S. Olcott in 1907. The Theosophical Society which they founded at New York in 1875, and whose branches spread over the world in the succeeding twenty years, ceased to exist as an integral unit in 1895 with the separation between the American and the other Sections of the Society.

The bodies of the Founders have been restored to the dust from which they were borrowed. The one light of the Theosophical Society has been broken into many spectral rays.

The time has come for a serious attempt to apply the principles of Theosophy to a study of the past forty years of Theosophical history. We propose, therefore, for the benefit and advantage of our fellow students and those to come, to present some views of recorded history in the light of recorded philosophy.

We disclaim in advance any unique or special fitness for this self-imposed task. The evidence that will be submitted is from records available to all who choose to consult them. The inferences that will be offered will be such as seem to us clearly warranted and unavoidable. We bespeak the help of all sincere students and invite their corrections, objections, criticisms and questions.

As the chapters proceed it will become necessary to introduce mention of living persons and organizations. This will not be done to condemn or to attack any person or society directly or indirectly, but solely and only because the facts must be brought to light if the truth is to be discerned.

### MASTERS AND THE WISDOM-RELIGION.

Public attention in the Western world to the fact of the existence of exalted Beings, perfected Men, and to a secret doctrine antedating and underlying all religions, was first brought about by the publication at New York, late in 1877, of *Isis Unveiled,* a work in two large volumes by Madame Blavatsky. The volumes were composed during the preceding three years, and are dedicated "to the Theosophical Society, which was founded at New York, A. D. 1875, to study the subjects on which they treat."

The first paragraph of the *Preface* reads as follows:

> The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science. It is offered to such as are willing to accept truth wherever it may be found, and to defend it, even looking popular prejudice straight in the face. It is an attempt to aid the student to detect the vital principles which underlie the philosophical systems of old.

She goes on to say that years ago she came in contact with certain men in the East endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that they may be truly designated as the sages of the Orient. In her studies mysteries were shown to be no mysteries. She received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self, and that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Names and places that to the Western mind have only a significance derived from Eastern fable, were shown to be realities. Science, Theology, every human hypothesis and conception born of imperfect knowledge, lost forever their authoritative character in her sight. The one living God had spoken through his oracle—man, and she was satisfied.

She says that such knowledge is priceless and that it has been hidden only from those who overlooked it, derided it, or denied its existence, and that her work is a plea for the recognition of the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology.

In the first chapter of volume I of *Isis,* Madame Blavatsky postulates certain propositions, which form the key-note of the volumes, which are thenceforth devoted to elaboration, arguments and evidences. She lays down that:

The discoveries of modern science do not agree with the oldest traditions which claim an incredible antiquity for our race;

That they divided the interminable periods of human existence

on this planet into cycles, during each of which mankind gradually reached the culminating point of highest civilization and gradually relapsed into abject barbarism;

That these cycles do not embrace all mankind at one and the same time; that

The doctrine of metempsychosis has been abundantly ridiculed by men of science and rejected by theologians, yet if it had been properly understood in its application to the indestructibility of matter and the immortality of spirit, it would have been perceived that it is a sublime conception. If the Pythagorean metempsychosis should be thoroughly explained and compared with the modern theory of evolution, it would be found to supply every "missing link" in the latter; that

Magic is as old as man and the ancients knew more concerning certain sciences than our modern savants have yet discovered; and that

As above, so it is below. That which has been will return again. As in heaven, so on earth.

She states that from the first ages of man the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth was in the safe keeping of the adepts; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe.

The chapter concludes:

> Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof that
>
> "If ancestry can be in aught believed,
> Descending spirits have conversed with man,
> And told him secrets of the world unknown."

In the sixth chapter of the second volume, the great doctrine of cycles—the Second Fundamental of the *Secret Doctrine*—is discussed and its bold outlines drawn, with a strong hint as to the pithecoid apes and the "missing links" of evolution. The rounds and races of humanity, the descent of spirit to the depths of materiality and its reascent—the dual evolution and the seven-fold steps in Kosmos and in Man—are sketched in.

In the twelfth chapter of the second volume there is a recapitulation of the fundamental propositions which have been successively elucidated in the course of the work. Some of these major statements are as follows:

> 1. There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever active.
>
> 2. Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal and indestructible; the lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.

3. Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third — the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

4. Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while he is still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.

5. Arcane knowledge misapplied, is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or WISDOM.

6. Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.

7. All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their record upon the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known.

8. Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality; among some peoples seership naturally prevails, among others mediumship. Some are addicted to sorcery, and transmit its secret rules of practice from generation to generation, with a range of psychical phenomena, more or less wide, as the result.

9. One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction — a "brown study," as some call it.

To the movements of the wandering astral form neither time nor space offer obstacles. The thaumaturgist, thoroughly skilled in occult science, can cause himself (that is, his physical body) to *seem* to disappear, or to apparently take on any shape that he may choose. He may make his astral form visible, or he may give it protean appearances.

Arcane science teaches that the abandonment of the living body by the soul frequently occurs, and that we encounter every day, in every condition of life, such living corpses. Various causes, among them overpowering fright, grief, despair, a violent attack of sickness, or excessive sensuality may bring this about. The vacant carcass may be entered and inhabited by the astral form of an adept sorcerer, or an elementary (an earth-bound disembodied human soul), or, very rarely, an elemental. Of course, an adept of white magic has the same power, but unless some very exceptional and great object is to be accomplished, he will never consent to pollute himself by occupying the body of an impure person.

To sum up all in a few words, MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will.

The adept can control the sensations and alter the conditions of the physical and astral bodies of other persons not adepts; he can also govern and employ, as he chooses, the spirits of the elements. He cannot control the immortal spirit of any human being, living or dead, for all such spirits are alike sparks of the Divine Essence, and not subject to any foreign domination.

A medium needs either a foreign intelligence — whether it be spirit or living mesmerizer — to overpower his physical and mental parts, or some factitious means to induce trance. But the adept has no need of any such extraneous aids — the simple exertion of his *will*-power is all-sufficient.

*Mankind* as a whole *have always been convinced of the existence of a personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man.* Futhermore, they believed that *there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions.* They rejected fatalism, for fatalism implies a blind course of some still blinder power. But they believed in *destiny,* which from birth to death every man is weaving thread by thread around himself, as a spider does his cobweb; and this destiny is guided either by that presence termed by some the guardian angel, or our more intimate astral inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the man of flesh. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail; and from the very beginning of the invisible affray the stern and implacable *law of compensation* steps in and takes its course, following faithfully the fluctuations. When the last strand is woven, and man is seemingly enwrapped in the net-work of his own doing, then he finds himself completely under the empire of this *self-made* destiny.

We write for those who will believe; who, like the writer, understand and know the illimitable powers and possibilities of the human astral soul.

*The trinity of nature is the lock of magic, the trinity of man the key that fits it.* Within the solemn precincts of the sanctuary the SUPREME had and has no name. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church — the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by any one who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God.*

The multitudinous religious faiths that mankind, early and late, have professed, most assuredly indicate that they have all been derived from one primitive source. Pre-Vedic Brahmanism and Buddhism are the double source from which all religions sprung; Nirvana is the ocean to which all tend.

In this final chapter of *Isis,* Madame Blavatsky states that those who were then best prepared to appreciate occultism were the spiritualists, although, through prejudice, until then the bitterest opponents to its introduction to public notice; that despite all foolish negations and denunciations the phenomena are real; that despite, also, their own assertions they are wholly misunderstood by the spiritualists themselves, the totally insufficient theory of the constant agency of disembodied human spirits in their production has been the bane of the *Cause,* and that a thousand mortifying rebuffs have failed to open their reason or intuition to the truth. She offers them philosophical deduction instead of unverifiable hypothesis, scientific analysis and demonstration instead of undiscriminating faith. She quotes that spiritualists have never faced the question: *What is the intelligence?* This is the great blot, the most frequent source of error, and that here we might learn with advantage from the ancients. There is the strongest disinclination among spiritualists to admit the possibility of the truth of occultism. In this respect they are as hard to convince as is the outer world of spiritualism.

The Theosophical Society, to which *Isis* was dedicated, had three avowed Objects, then worded as follows:

I. To form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.

II. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

III. The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

Assent to the First Object only was obligatory on the part of all Fellows, the other objects being subsidiary and optional.

The bulk of the original membership consisted of spiritualists, Colonel Olcott being the only one of these who remained prominently identified with the Society.

A British Theosophical Society was formed in 1876, whose membership also consisted chiefly of spiritualists.

Occasional meetings of the Parent Society were had, but its intermittent activities were confined chiefly, if not entirely, to experiments and investigations of a quasi relevancy to the Third Object. Madame Blavatsky rarely, if ever, attended any of the sessions. The Society as such dwindled in membership and lapsed into dormancy. What applies to the New York Society was also true of the British Society, which afterward was reanimated as the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, after the publication of the *"Occult World"* by A. P. Sinnett, in London, in the summer of 1881.

But very active correspondence went on with spiritualists, kabalists, scientists and others in England, France, Russia, Greece and India. A tentative affiliation was entered into with the Arya-Samaj. This was an attempt on the part of certain religious reformers in India to restore the purity of the ancient teachings. During the same period—1874-1878—many articles were contributed to various spiritualist publications, as well as to the daily press. Many of these will be found in the book, *"A Modern Panarion,"* published at London in 1895, and which contains a collection of the miscellaneous writings of Madame Blavatsky.

During the whole of this same period, as subsequently developed, Madame Blavatsky was also engaged in imparting private teachings to William Q. Judge, to Col. H. S. Olcott, and to others. Multitudes of phenomena were privately exhibited to these pupils in illustration of the teachings imparted and the laws propounded. Rumors of these "modern miracles" and "psychological tricks" were more or less in the air, and Madame Blavatsky's rooms were thronged each night with guests and visitors of every shade of thought and opinion. It does not appear from any source that she ever gave any public exhibition of her powers, ever exacted any charges or fees of any description, ever boasted, or ever drew attention to herself. On the contrary, all the testimony extant, however the witnesses may disagree with each other or with themselves, as to Madame Blavatsky, her powers, nature, or teaching, is uniformly that she possessed powers and control of forces incredible of belief from the standpoint of any accepted knowledge of nature or nature's laws. The testimony is also uniform that her exhibitions were always as an accom-

paniment to or in explanation of her teachings or her work. All these will be more fully considered in their proper place and order.

Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott sailed for India in December, 1878, stopping a fortnight in London on the way, and arriving at Bombay in February, 1879. Mr. Judge remained at New York, and the Society there attracted but little public notice for several years. It was reorganized in 1881 as the Aryan Theosophical Society. The Rochester (N. Y.) Theosophical Society was organized in 1882, the Pioneer Theosophical Society in St. Louis in 1883, and the Chicago Theosophical Society and the Gnostic Theosophical Society of Washington, D. C., in 1884.

The Ionian Theosophical Society was organized in Corfu in 1877; the Queensland Theosophical Society in Brisbane, Australia, in 1881; the St. Thomas Theosophical Society, at St. Thomas, West Indies, in 1881; The Theosophical Society of the East and of the West was organized at Paris, in 1884; the Odessa Group in Russia in 1883; the Scottish Theosophical Society at Glasgow in 1884 and the Germania Theosophical Society at Elberfeld, Germany, in the same year.

Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott organized the Bombay Theosophical Society at Bombay, India, in 1880; the Prayag Psychic Theosophical Society was organized at Allahabad in 1881, and the Simla Eclectic Theosophical Society in the same year. The first Theosophical Society in Ceylon was established in 1880.

In the period to 1885 there had been established a half dozen societies in America, as many more in Europe, and upwards of four score in India and Ceylon.

The first periodical devoted to the interest and objects of the Society was *The Theosophist,* the first monthly number of which bears date of Bombay, October, 1879. Its cover page contains the inscription: "A Monthly Journal Devoted to Oriental Philosophy, Art, Literature, and Occultism, Embracing Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and Other Secret Sciences. Conducted by H. P. Blavatsky, Bombay, India, Under the Auspices of the Theosophical Society." This first number contains articles on the purpose of the Society and the magazine; on the Drift of Western Spiritualism, and articles answering the questions, What is Theosophy? and What are the Theosophists?

The first paragraph of text on the first page sets forth the relation of the work in India and England to the work begun in New York, in these words:

> For the convenience of future reference, it may as well be stated here that the committee, sent to India by the Theosophical Society, sailed from New York December 17th, 1878, and landed at Bombay, February 16th, 1879; having passed two weeks in London on the way.

The article, *What Is Theosophy,* contains these sentences upon a subject much mooted in later years by followers as well as enemies:

> Theosophy believes also in the *Anastasis* or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series or changes in the soul.

And a foot-note to the article adds the intention to show in a series of articles "that from Pythagoras, who got his wisdom in India, down to our best known modern philosophers and theosophists —David Hume, and Shelley, the English poet—the Spiritists of France included—many believed and yet believe in metempsychosis or reincarnation of the soul."

The number of *The Theosophist* for April, 1880, being Vol. I, No. 7, contains an article on "The Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood," with Principles, Rules and Bye-Laws, as revised December 17th, 1879. Section XI of this article recites that "the Society consists of three sections. The highest or First Section is composed exclusively of proficients or initiates in Esoteric Science and Philosophy, who take a deep interest in the Society's affairs and instruct the President-Founder how best to regulate them, but whom, none but such as they voluntarily communicate with, have the right to know."

"The Second Section embraces such Theosophists as have proved by their fidelity, zeal, and courage, and their devotion to the Society, that they have become able to regard all men as equally their brothers, irrespective of caste, colour, race, or creed; and who are ready to defend the life or honour of a brother Theosophist even at the risk of their own lives."

"The administration of the superior Sections need not be dealt with at present in a code of rules laid before the public. No responsibilities, connected with these superior grades, are incurred by persons who merely desire ordinary membership of the third class."

"The Third is the Section of Probationers. All new Fellows are on probation, until their purpose to remain in the Society has become fixed, their usefulness shown, and their ability to conquer evil habits and unwarrantable prejudices demonstrated. Advancement from Section to Section depends upon merit only."

Section XIII defines that "there are three kinds of Fellows in the third Section, viz., Active, Corresponding and Honorary. Of these the Active only are grouped in degrees according to merit; the grade of Corresponding Fellow embraces persons of learning and distinction who are willing to furnish information of interest to the Society; and the diploma of Honorary Fellow is exclusively reserved for persons eminent for their contributions to theosophical knowledge or for their services to humanity."

Thus has been briefly sketched the framework of teaching and events in the first decade of the Theosophical Movement of the Nineteenth century, the period from 1874 to 1884. It is marked by the coming together in this life of the three Founders; the establishment of the Society and the spread of its roots from America to Europe, Asia and Australasia; by the publication of *Isis Unveiled, The Theosophist, The Occult World,* and *Esoteric Buddhism.*

Vast changes have occurred in the world of human thought, philosophic, scientific and religious, since 1874. These changes cannot be intelligently understood and accounted for outside of the

application of the teachings of Theosophy, a knowledge of the events that accompanied its promulgation, and a grasp of their significance.

In religion, the orthodox theologies of the various christian sects were as hopelessly anthropomorphic and rigid as were the Pharisees of old, or the Brahmins of India to-day. The faithful risked their all on blind belief in their several dogmas and observances of the rites enjoined. Freedom of thought was heresy, rejection of any of the canons enjoined, atheism. Soul was not admitted to exist outside the Church, which usurped all the functions of creation, preservation and destruction.

In science, materialism reigned supreme. The universe had been vivisected and found to consist of matter, force and their phenomena. Theology having established to its own satisfaction the dictum, No miracle, no God, science, rejecting miracle, accepted the conclusion and was profoundly atheistical. Blind credulity in the form of superstition on the one hand, blind credulity in the form of materialism on the other, encompassed Western humanity. Theology applied the gospel of *sauve qui peut* to the next world, science to this.

What passed for philosophy was purely speculative and empirical. Adolescent thinkers waved their antennæ in the various fields of human experience and reported their sensations and theories. The best thinkers of the day, those who by contrast were boldest in their flights, alternately essayed to write a syllabus of the soul from the testimony and opinion of materialism, or to compose a system of law and justice from the material of theology.

In the midst of all these there were poured during the preceding generation a horde of uncanonical experiences, not to be reconciled with either—the phenomena of spiritualism. It needs an examination of the files of newspapers and periodicals of the time for one of our day to form even a faint concept of the *furore* of séances, rappings, materializations, communications and messages, public and private—as violently in contrast and out of relation to the current orthodoxy of both theology and materialism as would be a volcanic eruption in contrast to a settled community in town or country. All was confusion, contradiction, clamor—a *levée en armes* in every quarter.

*Isis Unveiled* was the *Message from the Masters* at this moment of anarchy before revolution, in the world of thought. It accepted all the claims of all the proponents—*and proceeded to examine them.* It accepted all the phenomena of human experience, physical and metaphysical,—*and proceeded to explain them.* It laid down with mathematical exactitude certain fundamental postulates, definitions, and axioms, as a preliminary standard for its surveys. These need but to be examined for their self-evident nature to become apparent to any thinking being, be he Jew or Gentile, bond or free. Their evidence is internal, not external. Step by step the major propositions of an all-inclusive philosophy are marshaled and demonstrated, and their corollaries worked out. The philosophy established is then

applied to the counter propositions of scientific speculations and of dogmatic religions, their errors and their points of cleavage shown, their insufficiency as apart from their inaccuracies evidenced, their origin and true basis in the Wisdom-Religion established. In the same way, and concurrently, the phenomena of all human experience are examined and explained. Gods and devils, the embodied and the disembodied, the true and the false, the good and the evil, are shown as the steps, stages and experiences in the great school of consciousness. The principles laid down are evidenced by their axiomatic nature throughout. Their application to the experiences of man, whether as unit or as race, brings order out of chaos, dissipates the ideas of miracle and of atheism, and shows the identity of the individual consciousness with the One Spirit.

The men of to-day are experiencing the fruit, without recognizing the source, of the dynamic power of the Message from the Masters. No man who speaks or reads English, no man who speaks or reads in any modern language, but lies under a vast debt to Shakespeare, whose genius and whose works have watered the fields of human imagination and expression. Whether acknowledged or unacknowledged, whether studied, pilfered, used, misused or abused, does not alter or vary the fact; it only alters and varies the nature and powers of those who come after him. In the same way, whether the great potency and spirit of *Isis Unveiled* are recognized or not, whether the men of our own and succeeding generations use their freedom of thought for greater liberty and enfranchisement, or for the license that breeds anarchy and decadence; whether the great ideas there loosed in the world are used for personal or sectarian benefit, for the exploitation of the more ignorant and unwary, or for the raising of the general level of human happiness and knowledge—in short whether the predominant note of Brotherhood or the discordant cries of race, creed, sex, caste, and color, shall prevail, *Isis Unveiled* opened the door to knowledge and power hitherto lost to the world for many centuries.

But just as there are those who study Shakespeare for the perfecting of themselves in usefulness to others, or with desire only for personal benefit and profit, so with all those who are called, or who call themselves, Theosophists. Every shade of opinion, of speculation, and of character, was and is to be found among those who in greater or smaller measure became students of the philosophy expounded and taught by Madame Blavatsky, or followers or associates at second and third hand of those who have contacted her or her teachings; not to speak of the vendors of ideas pilfered from the fountain of her wisdom, adulterated and polluted to the requirements of their calling or prejudice, and offered under private labels.

It is but a survival of the miracle idea, the reincarnation in a new terminology of a dead or moribund human desire for results without effort, to think that a change in character follows upon a change of "faith." The same human defects that perverted Brahmanism, Buddhism and Christianity out of all semblance to the Message and example of the Founders, still exist, and will continue

to exist until human nature ceases to be human nature, until the human being assimilates by study and application, by self-induced and self-devised efforts, the Wisdom of the Divine incarnations. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, however it may be regrettable, that by none has Theosophy or the nature of H. P. Blavatsky, been more misunderstood and perverted than by professed and sincere followers of her teaching and example.

It has been taught by Col. H. S. Olcott and repeated by many others, and is now the belief of many students, that H. P. Blavatsky was herself ignorant of reincarnation during the period of the writing of *Isis Unveiled*. It was believed by him, and is believed by others prominent in the eyes of the public as exponents of Theosophy, that Madame Blavatsky was a student, a "chela," a spiritualist, a "medium;" a human being as ignorant in matters occult, and as fallible and prone to errors as themselves—more so, in fact, since they are able to measure her with an exactitude she never gave out in her own regard; since they profess to perceive errors and mistakes of fact, philosophy, and judgment in her which she apparently never perceived in herself, while none of them, at once her followers, critics and judges, seems ever to be moved by any doubts as to his own infallibility of perception and inference in respect to her. We shall recur to this subject later.

In this preliminary chapter, therefore, it has seemed to us both wise and necessary to present in as condensed and terse a form as possible the essence of fact and philosophy which is undisputed in any quarter, covering the first decade of teaching and promulgation.

Students are asked to consider the extracts and condensations from *Isis* in the light of what was later written and taught by Madame Blavatsky, and to ask themselves whether *Isis* is in any portion *in conflict or in inconsistency* with anything she later gave out. True it is that much that was later taught is not in *Isis*; it might also develop to those who have hitherto overlooked the fact, derided it, or denied its existence, that if they search again, and in the *right spirit*, they may find some matters exposed, like an outcropping ledge of precious metal, that attention was later rather diverted from than attracted to.

The typographical and verbal errors in *Isis* were discussed by Madame Blavatsky in *The Path*, for November, 1886, entitled "Theories About Reincarnation and Spirits," an article which was reprinted in this magazine for the month of April, 1914. Again, in the article, "My Books," signed by her on April 27, 1891—eleven days before her death—and printed in *Lucifer* for May 15, 1891, there is further reference to *Isis*. This article was reprinted in this magazine last month. It contains her specific declaration that *Isis Unveiled* was a message from the Masters. For those who will study and apply, *Isis* is its own proof that there are Masters and that the work is Theirs. For those who desire testimony, and who have gained some respect for the credibility of the witness, there is H.P.B.'s declaration.

(*To be continued.*)

# THE SIGNS OF THIS CYCLE*

MEN of all nations for many years in all parts of the world have been expecting something they know not what, but of a grave nature, to happen in the affairs of the world. The dogmatic and literal Christians, following the vague prophecies of Daniel, look every few years for their millenium. This has not come, though predicted for almost every even year, and especially for such as 1000, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, and now for the year 2000. The red Indians also had their ghost dances not long ago in anticipation of their Messiah's coming.

The Theosophists too, arguing with the ancients and relying somewhat on the words of H. P. Blavatsky, have not been backward in respect to the signs of the times.

But the Theosophical notions about the matter are based on something more definite than a vague Jewish priest's vaticinations. We believe in cycles and in their sway over the affairs of men. The cyclic law, we think, has been enquired into and observations recorded by the ancients during many ages; and arguing from daily experience where cycles are seen to recur over and over again, believing also in Reincarnation as the absolute law of life, we feel somewhat sure of our ground.

This cycle is known as the dark one; in Sanscrit, Kali Yuga, or the black age. It is dark because spirituality is almost obscured by materiality and pure intellectualism. Revolving in the depths of material things and governed chiefly by the mind apart from spirit, its characteristic gain is physical and material progress, its distinguishing loss is in spirituality. In this sense it is the Kali Yuga. For the Theosophist in all ages has regarded loss of spirituality as equivalent to the state of death or darkness; and mere material progress in itself is not a sign of real advancement, but may have in it the elements for its own stoppage and destruction. Preeminently this age has all these characteristics in the Western civilizations. We have very great progress to note in conquests of nature, in mechanical arts, in the ability to pander to love of luxury, in immense advancements with wonderful precision and power in the weapons made for destroying life. But side by side with these we have wretchedness, squalor, discontent, and crime; very great wealth in the hands of the few, and very grinding poverty overcoming the many.

As intellectualism is the ruler over this progress in material things, we must next consider the common people, so called, who have escaped from the chains which bound them so long.

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*This article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for October, 1892.

They are not exempt from the general law, and hence, having been freed, they feel more keenly the grinding of the chains of circumstance, and therefore the next characteristic of the cycle—among human beings—is *unrest*. This was pointed out in the PATH in vol. I, p. 57, April, 1886, in these words:

> The second prophecy is nearer our day and may be interesting; it is based upon cyclic changes. This is a period of such a change, and we refer to the columns of the *Sun* (of the time when the famous brilliant sunsets were chronicled and discussed not long ago) for the same prognostications. . . . . This glorious country, free as it is, will not long be calm; *unrest is the word for this cycle. The people will rise.* For what, who can tell? The statesman who can see for what the uprising will be might take measures to counteract. But all your measures cannot turn back the iron wheel of fate. And even the city of New York will not be able to point its finger at Cincinnati and St. Louis. Let those whose ears can hear the whispers and the noise of the gathering clouds of the future take notice; let them read, if they know how, the physiognomy of the United States whereon the mighty hand of nature has traced the furrows to indicate the character of the moral storms that will pursue their course no matter what the legislation may be.

This was not long after the riots in Cincinnati, and New York was warned, as well as other places inferentially, that the disturbances in Ohio were not to be by any means the end. And now in 1892, just six years after our prophecy, three great States of the Union are in uproar, with the poor and the rich arrayed against each other, arms in hand. Pennsylvania at the works of a great factory almost in a civil war; New York calling her militia out to suppress disorder among workmen and to protect the property of corporations who have not taken a course to inspire their workers with love; and Tennessee sending military and volunteers to do battle with some thousands of armed miners who object to convicted lawbreakers being allowed to take the work and the wages away from the citizens. We are not dealing with the rights or the wrongs of either side in these struggles, but only referring to the facts. They are some of the moral signs of our cycle, and they go to prove the prognostications of the Theosophist about the moral, mental, and physical unrest. The earth herself has been showing signs of disturbance, with an island blown up in one place, long inactive volcanoes again erupting, earthquakes in unaccustomed places such as Wales and Cornwall. All these are signs. The cycle is closing, and everywhere unrest will prevail. As lands will disappear or be changed, so in like manner ideas will alter among men. And, as our civilization is based on force and devoid of a true philosophical basis, the newest race—in America—will more quickly than any other show the effect of false teachings and corrupted religion.

But out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time; yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth.

# FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH*

## APPENDIX TO "DEVACHAN."

### Appendix A.

It may be worth the reader's while to learn what Colonel H. S. Olcott has to say in his Buddhist Catechism (14th Thousand) of the intrinsic difference between "individuality" and "personality." Since he wrote not only under the approval of the High Priest, but also under the direct instruction of his Guru (Spiritual Master), his words will have weight for the student of Occultism. This is what he says, in his Appendix:—

"Upon reflection, I have substituted 'personality' for 'individuality' as written in the first edition. The successive appearances upon one or many earths, or 'descents into generation' of the *tanhaically*-coherent parts (Skandhas) of a certain being, are a succession of personalities. In each birth the *personality* differs from that of the previous or next succeeding birth. Karma, the *deus ex machina,* masks (or shall we say, reflects?) itself now in the personality of a sage, again as an artisan and so on throughout the string of births. But though personalities ever shift, the one line of life along which they are strung like beads runs unbroken.

"It is ever *that particular line*, never any other. It is therefore individual, an individual vital undulation which began in Nirvana or the subjective side of Nature, as the light or heat undulation through æther began at its dynamic source; is careering through the objective side of Nature, under the impulse of *Karma* and the creative direction of *Tanha;* and tends through many cyclic changes back to Nirvana. Mr. Rhys Davids calls that which passes from personality to personality along the individual chain, 'character' or 'doing.' Since 'character' is not a mere metaphysical abstraction but the sum of one's mental qualities and moral propensities, would it not help to dispel what Mr. Rhys Davids calls, 'the desperate expedient of a mystery' [*Buddhism, p.* 101] if we regarded the life undulation as individuality and each of its series of natal manifestations as a separate personality? The perfected individual, Budhistically speaking, is a Buddha, I should say; for a Buddha is but the rare flower of humanity, without the least supernatural admixture. And as countless generations ('Four Asankheyyas and a hundred thousand cycles.' Fausböll and Rhys Davids' *Buddhist Birth Stories, p.* 13) are required to develope a man into a Buddha, and *the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births,* what shall we call that which thus wills and perseveres? *Character?* or Individuality; an individuality but partly manifested in any *one* birth, but built up of fragments from all the births?

*This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* for March, 1883.

"The denial of 'soul' by Buddha (see *Sanyutto Nikaya*, the Sutta Pitaka) points to the prevalent delusive belief in an independent transmissible personality; an entity that could move from birth to birth unchanged, or go to a place or state where, as such perfect entity, it could eternally enjoy or suffer. And what he shows is that the 'I am I' consciousness is, as regards permanency logically impossible, since its elementary constituents constantly change, and the 'I' of one birth differs from the 'I' of every other birth. But everything that I have found in Buddhism accords with the theory of a gradual evolution of the perfect man, viz., a Buddha through numberless natal experiences. And in the consciousness of that person who at the end of a given chain of beings attains Buddha-hood, or who succeeds in attaining the fourth stage of Dhyana, or mystic self-development, in any one of his births anterior to the final one, the scenes of all these serial births are perceptible. In the Jatakattahavannana, so well translated by Mr. Rhys Davids, an expression continually recurs which I think rather supports such an idea, viz: 'Then the blessed one *made manifest an occurrence hidden by change of birth*,' or 'that which had been hidden by, &c.' Early Buddhism then, clearly held to a permanency of records in the Akasa, and the potential capacity of man to read the same when he has evoluted to the stage of true individual ENLIGHTENMENT." (pp. 54-57.)

## APPENDIX B.

Having been asked:—"How then? Is there no change of occupation for souls in *Devachan?* Is one moment of earthly sensation only selected for perpetuation?"—our MASTERS reply in the negative. No; *Devachan* is no monotonous condition, in which some one or even two or more moments of earthly sensations are indefinitely perpetuated—stretched so to say, throughout æons. For, this would be contrary to all analogies and antagonistic to the law of cause and effect under which results are proportioned to antecedent energies. There are two fields of causal manifestations—the objective and subjective. The grosser energies—those which operate in the denser condition of matter—manifest objectively in the next physical life, their outcome being the new personality of each birth marshaling within the grand cycle of the evoluting individuality. It is but the moral and spiritual activities that find their sphere of effects in *Devachan*. And thought and fancy being limitless, how can it be argued for one moment that there is any thing like monotony in the state of *Devachan?* Few are the men whose lives were so utterly destitute of feeling, love, or of a more or less intense predilection for some one line of thought as to be made unfit for a proportionate period of *Devachanic* experience,—beyond their earthly life. So, for instance, while the vices, physical and sensual attractions, say, of a great philosopher, but a bad friend, and a selfish man—may result in the birth of a new and still greater intellect, but at the same time a most miserable man, reaping the

*Karmic* effects of all the causes produced by the "old" being and whose make-up was inevitable from the preponderating proclivities of that being in the preceding birth, the intermedial period between the two physical births *cannot* be—in nature's exquisitely well adjusted laws—but a *hiatus* of unconsciousness. There can be no such dreary blank as kindly promised, or rather implied by Christian Protestant theology to the "departed souls," which, between death and "resurrection" have to hang on in space, in mental catalepsy awaiting the "Day of Judgement." Causes produced by mental and spiritual energy being far greater and more important than those that are created by physical impulses—their effects have to be—for weal or woe—proportionately as great. Lives on this earth or other earths, affording no proper field for such effects, and every labourer being entitled to his own harvest—they have to expand in—either *Devachan* or *Avitchi*.* Bacon, for instance, whom a poet called—

"The brightest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind"

—might re-appear in his next incarnation as a greedy money-getter, with extraordinary intellectual capacities. But, however great the latter, they would find no proper field in which that particular line of thought pursued during his previous life-time by the founder of modern philosophy could reap all its dues. It would be but the astute lawyer, the corrupt attorney-general, the ungrateful friend, and the dishonest Lord-chancellor who might find, led on by his Karma, a congenial new soil in the *body* of the money-lender, and re-appear as a new Shylock. But where would Bacon, the incomparable thinker, with whom philosophical inquiry upon the most profound problems of nature was "first and last, and only love," where would this "intellectual giant of his race"—once disrobed of his lower nature—go to? Have all the effects of that magnificent intellect to vanish and disappear? Certainly not. Thus his moral and spiritual qualities would also have to find a field in which their energies could expand themselves. *Devachan* is such field. Hence—all the great plans of moral reform, of intellectual research into abstract principles of nature, all the divine, spiritual aspirations that had so filled the brightest part of his life, would, in *Devachan*, come to fruition; and the abstract entity, known in the preceding birth as Francis Bacon, and that *may* be known in its subsequent re-incarnation as a despised usurer—that Bacon's own creation, his Frankenstein, the son of his *Karma*—shall in the meanwhile occupy itself in this inner world, also of its own preparation, in enjoying the effects of the grand beneficial, spiritual causes sown in life. It would live a purely and spiritually conscious existence—a dream of realistic vividness—until Karma being satisfied in that direction and the ripple of force reaching the edge of its sub-cyclic basin, the being should move into its next area of causes—either in this same world or another according to his stage of progression . . . Therefore, there *is* "a change of occupation," a continual change—in *Devachan*.

*The lowest states of *Devachan* interchain with those of *Avitchi*.

For that dream-life is but the fruition, the harvest time of those psychic seedgerms dropped from the tree of physical existence in our moments of dream and hope; fancy glimpses of bliss and happiness stifled in an ungrateful social soil, blooming in the rosy dawn of *Devachan*, and ripening under its ever fructifying sky. If man had but one single moment of ideal experience, not even then could it be, as erroneously supposed, the indefinite prolongation of that "single moment." That one note struck from the lyre of life would form the key-note of the beings' subjective state and work out into numberless harmonic tones and semi-tones of psychic phantasmagoria. There, all unrealized hopes, aspirations, dreams—become fully realized, and the dreams of the objective become the realities of the subjective existence. And there, behind the curtain of *Maya*, its vaporous and deceptive appearances are perceived by the INITIATE who has learned the great secret how to penetrate thus deep into the ARCANA OF BEING. . . . . .

## APPENDIX C.

Objectors of that kind will be simply postulating an incongruity: an intercourse of entities in *Devachan* which applies only to the mutual relationship of physical existence! Two sympathetic souls, both disembodied, will each work out its own Devachanic sensations, making the other a sharer in its subjective bliss. This will be as real to them, naturally, as though both were yet on this earth. Nevertheless, each is dissociated from the other as regards personal or corporeal association. While the latter is the only of its kind that is recognized by our earth experience as an *actual* intercourse, for the *Devachanee* it would be not only something unreal but could have no existence for *it* in any sense, not even as a delusion: a physical body or even a *Mayavi-rupa* remaining to *its* spiritual senses as invisible as it is itself to the physical senses of those who loved it best on earth. Thus even though one of the "sharers" were alive and utterly unconscious of that intercourse in his waking state, still every dealing with him would be to the *Devachanee* an absolute *reality*. And what *actual* companionship could there ever be other than the purely idealistic one as above described, between two *subjective* entities which are not even as material as that ethereal body-shadow—the *Mayavi-rupa?* To object to this on the ground that one is thus "cheated by nature" and to call it "a delusive sensation of enjoyment which has no reality" is to show oneself utterly unfit to comprehend the conditions of life and being outside of our material existence. For how can the same distinction be made in *Devachan—i. e.* outside of the conditions of earth-life between what we call a reality, and a factitious or an artificial counterfeit of the same, in this, our world? The same principle cannot apply to the two sets of conditions. Is it conceivable that what we call a reality in our embodied, physical state will exist under the same conditions as an actuality for a disembodied entity? On earth, man is dual—

in the sense of being a thing of matter and a thing of spirit; hence the natural distinction made by his mind—the analyst of his physical sensations and spiritual perceptions—between an actuality and a fiction: though, even in this life the two groups of faculties are constantly equilibrating each other, each group when dominant seeing as fiction or delusion what the other believes to be most real. But in *Devachan* our Ego has ceased to be dualistic, in the above sense, and become a spiritual, mental entity. That which was a fiction, a dream in life, and which had its being but in the region of "fancy" becomes under the new conditions of existence—the only possible *reality*. Thus, for us, to postulate the possibility of any other reality for a *Devachanee* is to maintain an absurdity, a monstrous fallacy, an idea unphilosophical to the last degree. The actual is that which is acted or performed *de facto:* "the reality of a thing is proved by its actuality." And the suppositious and artificial having no possible existence in that *devachanic* state, the logical sequence is that every thing in it is actual and real. For, again whether overshadowing the five principles during the life of the personality, or entirely separated from the grosser principles by the dissolution of the body—the sixth principle, or our "Spiritual Soul," has no substance,—it is ever *Arupa;* nor is it confined to one place with a limited horizon of perceptions around it. Therefore whether *in* or *out* of its mortal body, it is ever distinct, and free from its limitations; and if we call its *devachanic* experiences "a cheating of nature," then we should never be allowed to call "reality" any of those purely abstract feelings that belong entirely to, and are reflected and assimilated by, our *higher* soul, such: *f. i.*, as an ideal perception of the beautiful, profound philanthropy, love, &c., as well as every other purely spiritual sensation that during life fills our inner being with either immense joy or pain.

## APPENDIX D.

"Devachan" is of course a *state* not a locality, as much as "Avitchi"—its antithesis [which please not to confound with *Hell*]. Esoteric Buddhist philosophy has three principal *lokas* so-called—namely (1) *Kama loka*, (2) *Rupa-loka;* and (3) *Arupa loka;* or in their literal translation and meaning—[1] world of desires or passions, of unsatisfied earthly cravings—the abode of "Shells" and Victims, of Elementaries and Suicides; [2] the world of Forms, *i. e.*, of shadows more spiritual, having form and objectivity but no substance; and [3] the *formless* world, or rather the world of no-Form, the incorporeal, since its denizens can have neither body, shape, nor colour for us mortals, and in the sense that we give to these terms. These are the three spheres of ascending spirituality in which the several groups of subjective and semi-subjective entities find their attractions. The time having not yet come to speak of the latter two, we will merely notice the first one, namely the *Kama-loka*. Thence it is, that all, but the remaining shells, the suicides and the victims of premature violent deaths, go according to their attractions

and powers either into the *Devachanic or the Avitchi* state, which two states form the numberless sub-divisions of "Rupa" and "Arupa" *lokas;* that is to say, that such states not only vary in degree, or in their presentation to the subject-entity as regards form, colour, &c.,—but that there is an infinite scale of such states, in their progressive spirituality and intensity of feeling; from the lowest in the *Rupa,* up to the highest and the most exalted in the *Arupa*-loka. The student must bear in mind that *personality* is the synonym for limitation; and that the more selfish, the more contracted the person's ideas, the closer will he cling to the lower spheres of being, the longer loiter on the plane of selfish social intercourse.

## Appendix E.

To use an antiphrasis—"Avitchi" is a state of the most *ideal spiritual* wickedness, something akin to the state of Lucifer, so superbly described by Milton. Not many though, are there who can reach it, as the thoughtful reader will perceive. And if it is urged that since there is *Devachan* for nearly all; for the good, the bad, and the indifferent, the ends of harmony and equilibrium are frustrated, and the law of Retribution and of impartial, implacable Justice hardly met and satisfied by such a comparative scarcity if not absence of its antithesis, then the answer will show *that it is not so.* "*Evil* is the dark son of Earth (matter) and *Good*—the fair daughter of Heaven" (or Spirit) says the Chinese philosopher; hence the place of punishment for most of our sins is the Earth—its birth place and play-ground. There is more apparent and relative, than actual evil even on earth, and it is not given to the *hoi polloi* to reach the fatal grandeur and eminence of a "Satan" every day. See foot-notes in art. "Death," by Eliphas Levi (October *Theosophist,* Vol. III,) the editorial answer to the art: "Death and Immortality" (November *Theosophist,* p. 28); and the words used by the author, when speaking of those who are immortal in good by identification with God (or Good), and immortal in evil by identification with Satan (Evil). Although the general rule applies but to "Sorcerers," *i. e.* adepts in Black Magic, real Initiates and sons of Evil, generally known as "the Brothers of the Shadow," yet there are exceptions to that rule as to every other. Occasionally men reaching the apex of evil become "unconscious" sorcerers; they identify themselves with "Satan," and then *Avitchi* becomes their Fate. Happy they are when thereby they avoid a worse punishment —a *loka* from which indeed, no traveller—either returns or, once within its dark precincts—pursues his journey!

# EVOLUTION*

A CORRESPONDENT OF PATH says: "I am unable to get a comprehensive view of evolution theosophically. Does a 'round' mean once around the 7 planets which belong to the earth chain? If so, how is the moon our parent?"

A round means a going once around the seven globes of the earth-chain. It was also called a "ring." Some have confused it with incarnating in the seven races on any one planet. The seven races have to go seven times around the seven globes of this chain, developing in each the characteristics of each, which cannot be obtained in any other way.

There are seven globes in the chain, of which the earth is one. The other six are not visible to us, as they are made of matter in a different state, and on a different plan from matter as we know it and see it. The first race began on Globe No. 1 and carried on evolution there, and then went to Globe No. 2, and so on all around the seven. This it did seven times. Race No. 2 proceeded similarly, having in its possession all that was gained by No. 1. We are now the Fifth Race engaged in going round the whole chain; hence we are called those of the Fourth Round, but are the Fifth Race. We must go round the whole chain of 7 planets 3 times more before as a race we are perfected.

When the Seventh Round is finished, as well as the halt for rest that follows, we begin again as a Sixth Race and go through Seven Rounds as such. When that is concluded we begin as the Seventh Race and repeat the process of Seven Rounds through the chain, thus bringing the grand evolution for this chain to a perfect end. After that we pass on upon a higher plane, the possessors of all the knowledge and development acquired during that sevenfold progress. This is the outline of the grand scheme, and, as you see, includes the whole series of seven planets.

But in every round of planets, on each one, and in each race as it begins and proceeds, there are many sub-races, root races, and offshoots, all necessary in the process of development for each race. For a race cannot spring up in a moment, out of nothing; it must grow forth from something. Therefore a new race is made by offshoots making sub-roots that finally grow slowly in the main race which will be. This is occurring in America, and hence here is afforded a present and perfect illustration. For here many examples of various root and sub and offshoot races coming together, by generation of children among themselves, are producing the subroot for the new race. This process will go on for a long period, during which old, decayed branchlets and offshoot families and races will be absorbed into the new growing stem, and when the time is ready—a long way off—for the new race, all will have to migrate to the next planet.

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It is now plain that *ring* and *round* do not mean the process of going through the race in its process of formation on any planet, as its beginnings come on and are finally replaced by its finished product, but that these words refer to the grand march around the whole chain of globes, of which this earth is the fourth.

The question about the moon ought now to be clear. It is evident that the moon is not one of the 7 planets. By reading the *Secret Doctrine* we see that the moon is a *deserted planet* on the same plane as the earth—a fourth-round globe of a previous manvantara. It is the old fourth globe of an old chain, and is the parent of the earth, while the other six globes of our chain have similar parents, visible only from those globes. It is our parent because we came from it when the hour struck, long ago, for the migration from it of the humanity that had thereon passed through its grand sevenfold pilgrimage. In like manner, some future day, this earth will become "a moon" to some newer planet not now born.

*Ques.* 2.—"If the prototype of all forms has always existed, how can new forms come through evolution of the physical or material?"

New material forms may come, but they are not prototypes. The latter are not material, therefore no confusion between the two can exist. There is evolution of material forms, but prototypes remain unaffected. This is a question which requires the questioner to look up exact meanings of the words used by him. It is not substantial. Fix the true meanings and the confusion will vanish.

*Ques.* 3.—"If man made his first appearance as a material body, why does the embryo pass through all the changes, vegetable and animal, before birth?"

It is the order of nature. All the atoms have to grow used to their work before they can do it well and quickly. At first as astral atoms only, they do it over and over again until all the atoms acquire the *habit* of doing it without fail. They then go on to other work. This having been the way for ages, the human body is now gestated in nine months, whereas at earlier periods such gestation took years, later on fewer years, and finally as now. In future times the process will be finished more quickly, and then the embryo will pass through all these old states almost instantaneously. The reason, therefore, is that the physical human molecules of this period of evolution have only acquired the ability to pass through the series in nine months, as a result of millions of years of prior slow work. For nature goes by steps, one at a time. The embryo exhibits these phases because there are still left in the matter used the old impressions, and racial evolution is gradually wiping them out by transforming them into new organs, by eliminating those not useful and by condemning others. When the work is fully understood by *every atom* so that it acts with unerring, machine-like precision, it will be possible to bring out a body in a very short space of time.

# THE BHAGAVAD-GITA*

*(Continued from June number.)*

## CHAPTER THIRD.

The first two verses of this chapter express a doubt arising in Arjuna's mind, and contain a request for its solution and for a method by which he may attain perfect knowledge—salvation. They are:

"If, according to thy opinion, O thou who givest all that men ask! the use of the understanding be superior to the practise of deeds, why then dost thou urge me to engage in an undertaking so dreadful as this?

Thou, as it were, confoundest my reason with a mixture of sentiments; with certainty declare one method by which I may obtain happiness, and explain it unto me."

The doubt arose because the Blessed Lord had declared that Arjuna must reach salvation by the right use of his understanding, and yet also must perform the dreaded act of opposing, perhaps slaying, his friends, tutors, and relatives. The request is the same as is repeated nearly every day in the Theosophical Society, and for which an answer is demanded.[1] It is for *one* single method, *one* practice, *one* doctrine, by means of which the student may obtain that for which he seeks, whether he has formulated it as happiness or only as a thirst for wonderful knowledge and power.

Arjuna's doubt is the one which naturally arises in one who for the first time is brought face to face with the great duality of nature—or of God. This duality may be expressed metaphysically by the words *thought* and *action,* for these mean in this the same as *ideation* and *expression.* Brahma, as the unmanifested God, conceives the idea of the Universe, and it at once expresses itself in what is called Creation by the Christian and by the Scientist Evolution. This Creation or Evolution is the action of God. With Him there is no difference in time between the arising of the idea and its expression in manifested objects. Coming down to consider the "created" objects, or the planes on which the thought of God has its expression through its own laws, we find the duality expressed by action and reaction, attraction and repulsion, day and night, outbreathing and inbreathing, and so on. When face to face with these, one is first confused by the multiplicity of objects, and we strive to find one simple thing, some law or doctrine, practice, dogma, or philosophy, which being known, happiness can be secured.

Although there *is* one single vehicle, to use a Buddhist term, yet it cannot be grasped in the beginning by the student. He must pass through sufficient experience to give him a greater conscious-

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[1] See *Lucifer* of April and May, 1888, in Articles *Practical Occultism* and *Occultism and the Occult Arts.*—(Ed.)

ness before he can understand this one *Vehicle*. Could that unique law be understood by the beginner, could it be possible to lift us by one word to the shining heights of power and usefulness, it is certain that Those who do know would gladly utter the word and give us the sole method, but as the only possible way in which we can get true happiness is by *becoming* and not by intellectually grasping any single system or dogma, the guardians of the lamp of truth have to raise men gradually from stage to stage. It was in such an attitude Arjuna stood when he uttered the verses with which this chapter opens.[1]

Krishna then proceeds to tell Arjuna that, it being impossible for one to remain in the world without performing actions, the right practice is to do those actions (duties of life whether in war or peace) which must be done, with a heart unattached to the result, being satisfied to do what is deemed the will of the Lord within, for no other reason than that it ought to be done. He sums it up in the words:

"But he who, restraining his senses by his heart, and being free from attachment to the results of action, undertakes active devotion through the organs of action, is worthy of praise."

This he illustrates by referring to those whom he calls "false pietists of bewildered soul," who remain inert with their bodies, restraining the organs of action, while at the same time they ponder on objects of sense which they have merely quitted in form. He thus shows the false position that it is useless to abandon the outer field of action while the mind remains attached to it, for such mental attachment will cause the ego to incarnate again and again upon earth. A little further on in the chapter he refers to a great yogee, one Janaka, who, even while a saint possessed of perfect knowledge which he had obtained while engaged in affairs of state, still performed actions.

These peculiar verses next occur:

"The creator, when of old he had created mortals and appointed sacrifice, said to them, 'By means of this sacrifice ye shall be propagated. It shall be to you a cow of plenty. By means of it do ye support the gods, and let these gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye shall obtain the highest felicity. For, being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will give you the desired food. He who eats the food given by them without first offering some to them, is a thief indeed.'"

At the outset I confess that these and succeeding verses do not appear easy to explain to Western minds. Although I have had some acquaintance with Occidental reasoning based on Occidental knowledge, it seems hopeless in the present century to elucidate much that is in this chapter. There are numerous points touched on by Krishna for which I find no response in Western thought.

[1] It is to be noticed that Arjuna and Krishna constantly change the names by which they address each other. When Krishna is dwelling on one subject or upon something that has to do with a particular phase of Arjuna's nature, he gives him some name that has reference to the quality, subject, or other matter referred to, and Arjuna changes the name of Krishna whenever he has need. As in these first verses, the name used for the Blessed Lord is *Janardana*, which means "giver of all that men ask,"—meaning thereby to refer to Krishna's potency in the bringing to fulfillment all wishes.—B.

Among these are the verses on sacrifice. To say all I think about sacrifice would only expose me to a charge of madness, superstition, or ignorance; it certainly would on every hand be received with incredulity. And while sneers or disbelief have no terrors, it is needless to advert to certain points in the chapter. Yet in passing them by, some sadness is felt that a high civilization should on these subjects be so dense and dark. Although Moses established sacrifices for the Jews, the christian successors have abolished it both in spirit and letter, with a curious inconsistency which permits them to ignore the words of Jesus that "not one jot or tittle of the law should pass until all these things were fulfilled." With the culmination of the dark age[1] it was, however, natural that the last vestige of sacrifice should disappear. On the ruins of the altar has arisen the temple of the lower self, the shrine of the personal idea. In Europe individualism is somewhat tempered by various monarchical forms of government which do not by any means cure the evil; and in America, being totally unrestrained and forming in fact the basis of independence here, it has culminated. Its bad effects—vaguely as yet shadowing the horizon—might have been avoided if the doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion had been also believed in by the founders of the republic. And so, after the sweeping away of the fetters forged by priestly dogma and kingly rule, we find springing up a superstition far worse than that which we have been used to call by the name. It is the superstition of materialism that bows down to a science which leads only to a negation.

There are, however, many willing minds here who have some intuition that after all there can be extracted from these ancient Hindu books more than is to be found if they are merely studied as a part of the lispings of infant humanity,—the excuse given by Prof. Max Muller for translating them at all. It is to such natural theosophists I speak, for, they will see that, even while advancing so rapidly in material civilization, we need the pure philosophical and religious teachings found in the Upanishads.

The peculiar explanation of the Mosaic sacrifices advanced by the mystic, Count St. Martin,[2] needs only a passing allusion. Students can think upon it and work out for themselves what truth it contains. He holds that the efficacy of the sacrifices rested in magnetic laws, for the priest, according to him, collected the bad effects of the sins of the people into his own person and then, by laying his hands upon the scape goat (as in one sacrifice), communicated those deleterious influences to the poor animal who in the wilderness exhaled them so far away as not to affect the people. It is suggested that Moses knew something of occult laws, since he was educated by the Egyptians and initiated by them. But St. Martin goes on to say that "the Jews were directed to kill even the animals in the land because the death of animals infected with the

[1] My readers may not agree with me that this is the Dark Age, inasmuch as that is the term applied to a period now past. That time, however, was a part of this; and this is even darker than that, as we think.—B.

[2] See Man: His Nature and Destiny (1802).—B.

impure influences of those nations preserved the Jews from the poison; whereas in sacrifices the death of clean animals attracted wholesome preservative influences," and that "pure and regular influences attached to certain classes and individuals of animals, and that *by breaking the bases in which they are fixed* they may become useful to man, and we should thus read Lev. xvii, 2: 'It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.'" He then says that the virtue of sacrifices comes through the rapport that man has with animals and nature; and, "if the Jews had observed the sacrifices faithfully, they would never have been abandoned, but would have drawn upon themselves every good thing they were capable of receiving. * * The extraordinary holocausts at the three great festivals were to bring down upon the people such active influences as corresponded to the epochs, for we see bulls, rams, and lambs always added to the burnt sacrifices * * Some substances, mineral, vegetable, and animal, retain a greater proportion of the living and powerful properties of their first estate." In these views St. Martin had some of the truth. But Moses ordained some sacrifices as a religious duty from sanitary reasons of his own, since the unthinking tribes would perform devotional acts willingly which, if imposed only as hygienic measures, they might omit.[1] The burnt offerings were, however, founded upon different views, very like those at the bottom of Hindu sacrifices, and the law of which is stated in these words from our chapter:

"Beings are nourished by food. Food has its origin from rain. *Rain is the fruit of sacrifice.* Sacrifice is performed by action."

It is not contended by either Brahmins or their followers that food will not be produced except from sacrifice performed according to Vedic ritual, but that *right food,* productive in the physical organism of the proper conditions enabling man to live up to his highest possibilities, alone is produced in that age where the real sacrifices are properly performed. In other places and ages food is produced, but it does not in everything come up to the required standard. In this age we have to submit to these difficulties, and can overcome them by following Krishna's instructions as given in this book. In a verse just quoted the distinction is made between food naturally produced without, and that due to, sacrifice, for he says, "For, being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will give you the *desired* food." Carrying out the argument, we find as a conclusion that if the sacrifices which thus nourish the gods are omitted, these "gods" must die or go to other spheres. And as we know that sacrifices are totally disused now, the "gods" spoken of must have long ago left this sphere. It is necessary to ask what and who they are. They are not the mere idols and imaginary beings so constantly mentioned in the indictments brought against India by missionaries, but are certain powers and properties of nature which leave the world when

[1] In India there are numerous religious observances having in view sanitary effects. For instance the cholera dance—a religious matter—in which, while disinfecting camphor is burned in heaps, a curious flower-umbrella-dance is engaged in with religious chants and music.—B.

the Kali Yuga or dark age, as this is called, has fully set in. Sacrifices therefore among us would be useless just at present.

There is, however, another meaning to the "revolution of the wheel" spoken of by Krishna. He makes it very clear that he refers to the principle of reciprocity or Brotherhood. And this he declares must be kept revolving; that is, each being must live according to that rule, or else he lives a life of sin to no purpose. And we can easily believe that in these days this principle, while admired as a fine theory, is not that which moves the people. They are, on the contrary, spurred by the personal selfish idea of each one becoming better, greater, richer than his neighbor. If continued unchecked it would make this nation one entirely of Black Magicians. And it was to counteract this that the Theosophical Society was founded, with the object of inducing men to once more revolve this wheel of Brotherly Love first set in motion by the "Creator when of old he had created mortals."

Krishna then proceeds to exhort Arjuna again to perform the duties appointed to him, and urges him to do it on the ground that he being a great man should set a good example that the lower orders would follow; saying,

> "He who understands the whole universe should not cause these people, slow and ignorant of the universe, to relapse from their duty."

Knowing that, under the great cyclic laws which govern us, periods arrive even in the worst of ages when good examples of living imprinted on the astral light cause effects ever increasing in intensity until at last the "gods" before referred to begin in distant spheres to feel the force of these good actions and to return again to help mankind on the recurrence of a better age, he implores Arjuna to be the very first to set the good example.

In such an age as this, the ritualistic sacrifice of a different age which has indeed a magical effect becomes a sacrifice to be performed by each man in his own nature upon the altar of his own heart. And especially is this so with theosophists of sincerity and aspiration. Being born as we are in these days, among families with but small heritage in the way of descent from unsullied ancestors, we are without the advantage of great natural spiritual leanings, and without certain peculiar powers and tendencies that belong to another cycle. But the very force and rapidity of the age we live in give us the power to do more now in fewer incarnations. Let us then recognize this, and learn what is our duty and do it. This portion of the chapter ends with a famous verse:

> "It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. Death is better in the performance of one's own duty. Another's duty is productive of danger."

WILLIAM BREHON, F.T.S.

(To be continued.)

# HIDDEN HINTS*

## IN THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

*(From p. 252 to p. 260, Vol. I.†)*

By W. Q. J.

Order of the Elements Esoterically is, *Fire, air, water, earth.* (2nd para.). Counting up from the earth, the order for the elementals, or the nature spirits in the elements, is: earth elementals, water elementals, air elementals, fire elementals. And it has always been said that those of the fire are the wisest and most distant so far as cognition of or by us is concerned, that the airy ones are also wise, and those of the water dangerous. Those of the earth have been described by seers in the form of gnomes sometimes seen by clairvoyant miners in the depths under us, and of this class also are those that have given rise to the superstition among the Irish respecting the fairies.

Fire in the Preceding Rounds. She says (p. 253), "For all we know, fire may have been pure akasa, the first matter of the builders". The phrase "For all we know" is sometimes to be translated "Thus it was".

The Fifth Element in the Fifth Round. This, as said before in these notes, will be "The gross body of akasa" (257), and "by becoming a familiar fact in nature to all men as air is familiar to us now, will cease to be hypothetical."

What Is the Sixth Sense to Be? In the first paragraph of page 258 she says that at first there will be a partial familiarity with a characteristic of matter to be known then as permeability, which will be perceived when certain new senses have been developed, and after that this singular characteristic will be fully known, as it will be developed concurrently with the sixth sense. We may therefore argue that she means to describe the sixth sense as one which will (among other things) give to us the power to permeate matter with ourselves. Let some one else now carry this idea further, as it is no doubt correct. It would seem that both the matter-characteristic and the power in man are being here and there exhibited, or else some of the phenomena seen at spiritualistic seances could never have happened; but alas! we need not look for aid there so long as the beloved "spirits from the summerland" continue to hold sway over their votaries.

The Earth in Its Early Periods. Some students have thought that this globe in its early times when, following the statements in *Esoteric Buddhism,* the human life-wave and so on had not come, there was no life on it, supposing in a vague way that there was, say in the fire-mist time, a mass of something devoid of life.

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† References are to the paging in the original edition of the *Secret Doctrine.*

This is contradicted and explained on page 258 in the second para, for: "Thus Occultism disposes of the Azoic age of science, for it shows that there never was a time when the earth was without life upon it". This is asserted for no matter what form or sort of matter thus, "Wherever there is an atom of matter, a particle or a molecule even in its most gaseous state, there is life in it, however latent or unconscious."

OF SPIRIT AND MATTER. In the commentary on p. 258 the author plainly writes, "Spirit is the first differentiation of and in space; and matter is the first differentiation of Spirit". This is a clear statement of what she desired to teach respecting spirit and matter, and as in other places it is said that spirit and matter are the opposite poles of the One—the Absolute—an agreement has to be made between the two. There is no real disagreement, since it is evident that differentiation must proceed in a definite order, from which it results that there must be always one state, plane, place, power, and idea in nature that is above and different from and beyond all others. And when we go beyond spirit, the highest we may speak of is the Absolute, which is the container of the next two—spirit and matter, the latter following the first in order of differentiation. These are said to be coeternal, and, indeed, are so, as far as our minds are concerned, for the reason that we cannot grasp either the first or the second differentiation of the absolute. But because this doctrine of the coeternalness of spirit and matter has been taught, there never being the one without the other also present, some students have fallen into a materialistic view, probably because matter is that which being near to us is most apparent, and others, remaining somewhat vague, do not define the doctrine at all. Spirit and matter are coeternal because they exist together in the absolute, and when the first differentiation spoken of above takes place, so does the second immediately. Hence, except when we are dealing with metaphysics, they must be regarded as the two poles of the one absolute. And the *Bhagavad Gita* does not support the contrary, for it only says there is no spirit without also matter, as it is dealing through the words of Krishna with things as they are *after* the differentiation has taken place.

There is another class of theosophists who speak of the "superpersonal god," asserting at the same time that they do not mean "a personal God", and they are opposed by still another class who point to the well-known denial by H.P.B. of the existence of a personal god. It is in the sentence quoted that both of these may come to an agreement, for the believers in the superpersonal deity can without doubt find support in the lines on p. 258. For if spirit is the first, then matter is a grade below it, however fine and imperceptible that distinction may be.

If further we say, as many of us do, that the great inherent ideas of man were given to him by the first great teachers whose descendants and pupils the Adepts are, then we here also see how it is that there is such a wide and universal belief in a God.

It must also be the origin of that universal optimism which may be found also in the ranks of the theosophists, who, while for present days are pessimistic, must be called the greatest optimists on the face of the earth. There are many other matters in this sentence. Many a student has puzzled his head very often in trying to discover from where come the impulse and the plan as well as the idea of perfection, for it must as a first thing reside somewhere, whether abstractly or concretely. Perhaps it is here; those students can look here at any rate.

A MYSTERIOUS PRINCIPLE MENTIONED. After going for a little space into the formation of this globe by the first builders, she speaks (page 259) of a certain *akasic* principle to which no name is given but left in hiatus. But in the note on that page we see, and I am violating nothing in referring to it, that very clearly is it pointed out that the primordial substance of which she then writes "is the very body of those spirits themselves and their very essence". Now in many places in her writings, and also in those of other knowing ones through all time, this primordial substance is said to be one that, once controlled, gives him who has power over it the most transcendent abilities,—sway alike over mind and matter.

She and all of us are quite safe in speaking of it, since there are but few indeed who will see anything in it at all. Yet the few can have the hint if they never got it before. This, however, should always remain as a hint, and there ought to be no attempt to make it clear to science, for nothing will be gained except ridicule and maybe worse.

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# A LITTLE VISION*

I stood where my old and wise friend had been, and as I listened in the silence the strong deep tones of a great organ swept through the air. On the wings of sound came a noble being, youth and man in all the ages. He was clad in robes of white and in his hand bore high a golden wand, from the tip of which blazed forth a silver star. "Look at the light, look not at anything else," he said. Then the organ tones changed to the furious hissing of a storm, and black clouds rolling up obliterated everything except the pure white star which blazed high over all. "Look at the light; fear not," came his voice. "Nothing can hurt it, for it is not of earth." The storm swept all away, then rushed off to the distance, and the beautiful, wise, strong, and ancient being vanished also. Yet far off the faint but dominating sound of a great diapason could be heard. It was the singing of the faithful choristers of the Lodge, those who know not fear and have left sorrow behind.

AMARAN.

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*THE RATIONALE OF MESMERISM, by A. P. Sinnett, author of *Esoteric Buddhism* (1892, Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., cloth, 228 pages). This book is written in Mr. Sinnett's clear style, but it seems labored and inadequate. We had hoped since 1888, when he began definite experiments in mesmerism, that Mr. Sinnett would bring out a book on the subject giving the esoteric—that is the Eastern—explanation of the matter. Indeed he says the esoteric theory is the only explanation of mesmerism, yet fails to give it, for the reference to the Higher Self and the septenary constitution of man is not the whole. The details of the complicated astral structure of man, with all its positive and negative currents, are not once referred to; not even the three well-known astral nerves, positive, negative, and neutral, intimately connected with the spinal column, and which a *true seer* would perceive, appear to be in his thought. Nor does he speak of the various important centers of forces in the body, nor yet of the subtle form of human electricity called Kundalini. But the book is another testimony to the existence of unseen and real planes of being,—so far good. A great heresy in it crops up in the pivotal claim that the Higher Self may be cultivated like athletics, and may be imperfectly developed, and is in our waking state entangled with the physical plane. Obviously his sensitives are not real seers. Passing to practical points—as our space is limited—we would draw attention to the error that "complete touch of the whole hand" is an aid. It is, *if you think so.* Then that silk and clothing interfere is another; again, if you think so, that interferes. But properly used, silk and certain plants are more efficacious than the hand. On page 159 is a fallacy in saying that if the brain is paralyzed the psychic self stupidly obeys, making the body act. If the brain is paralyzed there certainly can be no action by limb or organ of speech. In these cases the brain is not paralyzed at all, but something else happens which permits the brain to work, under the guidance of the operator. The polarity and change of polarity of the bodily cells are overlooked by the author, as also the actual life, consciousness, and memory of each cell. The book is well bound and printed on good paper.

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in Vol. 1 Theosophy, 492

# MESMERISM AND THE HIGHER SELF*

RECENTLY a book on the subject of the "Rationale of Mesmerism" having been published in London, written by Mr. A. P. Sinnett, I read in it some astounding statements about the relation of the higher self to Mesmerism. He says that it is the higher self that acts in the case of those mesmerized subjects who show clairvoyance, clairaudience, and the like, of a high order. That is to say, the views expressed amount to the doctrine that pure spirit, which the Higher Self is, can be acted on and affected by the gross physical power of mesmerism. This idea seems to be quite contrary to all that we have read in Theosophical literature on the philosophy of man and his complex nature. For if there is anything clearly stated in that, it is that the higher self cannot be affected in this manner. IT is a part of the supreme spirit, and as such cannot be made to go and come at the beck of a mesmerizer.

It is a well known fact that the more gross and physical the operator, the stronger is his influence, and the easier he finds it to plunge his subject into the trance state. Seldom do we find the very delicate, the nervous, or the highly spiritualized able to overcome the senses of another by these means. For when we have thus spiritualized our bodies, the means by which we can affect others and make them do what we wish are such as pertain to a finer plane of matter than the one with which mesmerism deals, and the particular instruments used are of an order that must not be described in these pages, since they are secret in their nature and

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must not be given out too soon. They can be discovered by those who look the proper way, and have been given out by way of hint many a time in the past decade, but discretion is to be observed. And even these means, fine and subtle as they are, do not act on the higher self, but upon exactly the same parts of our inner nature as those reached by ordinary mesmerism. Not only does the whole of our philosophy sustain the contention that the higher self is not acted on, but we have also the eminent writer H. P. Blavatsky saying that the human spirit—and that is the higher self—cannot be influenced by any man.

Mesmeric force is purely material, although of a finer sort of materiality than gas. It is secreted by the physical body in conjunction with the astral man within, and has not a particle of spirituality about it further than that spirit is immanent in the whole universe. And when it is brought to bear on the willing or unwilling subject, the portion of the nature of the latter which is waked up, or rather separated from the rest, is the astral man.

Probably the reason why Mr. Sinnett and others make the mistake of confounding this with the higher self is that the utterances of the one entranced seem so far to transcend the limits of ordinary waking consciousness. But this only makes the possible horizon of consciousness wider; it does not prove we are hearing direct from the spirit. The vast powers of memory are well known, and when we add to the worldly estimate of its powers the knowledge of the ancient esoteric schools, we can see that the uncovering of the subconscious memories will give us much that a spiritualist might attribute to a denizen of the summerland. Thus in the famous case of the ignorant servant of the pastor who was in the habit of walking up and down in her hearing and repeating aloud verses from the Latin and the Greek, we know that when she fell sick with fever her constant repetition of those Latin and Greek verses was an act of the under memory which had caught and retained all, though she was, in her usual health, too ignorant to say one word in either of those languages. These illustrations can be multiplied a thousand fold from the records of clairvoyants of all sorts and conditions. When the barrier to the action of the subconscious memory is removed, whether by sickness, by training, by processes, or by natural change of the body, all the theretofore unperceived impressions come to the surface.

Clairvoyance and similar phenomena are explicable by the knowledge of the inner man, and, that being so, it is straining a point and degrading a great idea to say the higher self is involved. For the inner astral man has the real organs which partially function through the one we know. The real eye and ear are there. So what happens in mesmeric trance is that the outer eye and ear are paralyzed for the time, and the brain is made to report what is seen and heard by the inner senses.

These, it is well known, are not limited by time or space, and so give to the operator very wonderful things when viewed from the ordinary level of observation.

And at the same time it is well known to those who have experimented strictly on the lines laid down by the masters of occultism that the sight and hearing and ideation of the mesmerized subject are all deflected and altered by the opinions and thoughts of the operator. And this is especially the case with very sensitive subjects who have gone into the so-called *lucid* state. They are in a realm of which they know but little, and will give back to him who has put them into that state answers on such subjects as the inner constitution of man and nature which will be enlarged copies of what the operator himself has been thinking on the same subject, if he has thought definitely on them. From the tenor of parts of the book I mentioned, it seems clear that the ideas as to the higher self there expressed emanated from sensitives who have in fact merely enlarged and confirmed the views expressed by the author of that work some years ago in "Transactions of the London Lodge" on the subject of the higher self, as may be seen from reading the latter. A simple subject of the mesmeric influence, no matter how far in advance of other sensitives, is not by any means a *trained seer,* but in the opinion of the esoteric schools is untrained, for training in this means a complete knowledge on the part of the seer of all the forces at work and of all the planes to which his or her consciousness gains entry. Hence one who merely goes into that condition by the force of the mesmeric fluid is a wanderer wholly unfit to guide any one. It is different in the case of the previously trained seer who uses the mesmeric fluid of another simply as an aid toward passing into that state. And the assertion can be made with confidence that there are no seers so trained in the western world yet. Hence no operator can have the advantage of the services of such, but all investigators are compelled to trust to the reports from the state of trance made by men or women—chiefly women—who never went through the long preliminary training and discipline, not only physically but also mentally, that are absolute prerequisites to seeing correctly with the inner eyes. Of course I except from this the power to see facts and things that take place near and far. But that is only the use of inner sight and hearing; it is not the use of the inner understanding. But on this subject I should like to say a little more at some future time.

WILLIAM BREHON.

# THOUGHTS ON KARMA*

EVERY day in life we see people overtaken by circumstances either good or bad and coming in blocks all at once or scattered over long periods of time. Some are for a whole life in a miserable condition, and others for many years the very reverse; while still others are miserable or happy by snatches. I speak, of course, of the circumstances of life irrespective of the effect on the mind of the person, for it may often be that a man is not unhappy under adverse circumstances, and some are able to extract good from the very strait lines they are put within. Now all this is the Karma of those who are the experiencers, and therefore we ask ourselves if Karma may fall in a lump or may be strung out over a long space of years. And the question is also asked if the circumstances of this life are the sum total result of the life which has immediately preceded it.

There is a little story told to a German mystic in this century by an old man, another mystic, when asked the meaning of the verse in the Bible which says that the sins of the father will be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation. He said: "There was once an Eastern king who had one son, and this son committed a deed the penalty of which was that he should be killed by a great stone thrown upon him. But as it was seen that this would not repair the wrong nor give to the offender the chance to become a better man, the counsellors of the king advised that the stone should be broken into small pieces, and those be thrown at the son, and at his children and grandchildren as they were able to bear it. It was so done, and all were in some sense sufferers yet none were destroyed." It was argued, of course, in this case that the children and grandchildren could not have been born in the family of the prince if they had not had some hand in the past, in other lives, in the formation of his character, and for that reason they should share to some extent in his punishment. In no other way than this can the Christian verses be understood if we are to attribute justice to the God of the Christians.

Each Ego is attracted to the body in which he will meet his just deserts, but also for another reason. That is, that not only is the body to give opportunity for his just reward or punishment, but also for that he in the past was connected with the family in which the body was born, and the stream of heredity to which it belongs is his too. It is therefore a question not alone of desert and similarity, but one of responsibility. Justice orders that the Ego shall suffer or enjoy irrespective of what family he comes to; similarity decrees that he shall come to the family in which there is some characteristic similar to one or many of his and thus having a drawing power; but responsibility, which is compounded of justice, directs that the Ego shall come to the race or the nation or

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the family to which its responsibility lies for the part taken by it in other lives in forming of the general character, or affecting that physical stream of heredity that has so much influence on those who are involved in it. Therefore it is just that even the grandchildren shall suffer if they in the past have had a hand in moulding the family or even in bringing about a social order that is detrimental to those who fall into it through incarnation. I use the word responsibility to indicate something composed of similarity and justice. It may be described by other words probably quite as well, and in the present state of the English language very likely will be. An Ego may have no direct responsibility for a family, national, or race condition, and yet be drawn into incarnation there. In such an event it is similarity of character which causes the place of rebirth, for the being coming to the abode of mortals is drawn like electricity along the path of least resistance and of greatest conductibility. But where the reincarnating Ego is directly responsible for family or race conditions, it will decide itself, upon exact principles of justice and in order to meet its obligations, to be reborn where it shall receive, as grandchild if you will, physically or otherwise the results of its former acts. This decision is made at the emergence from Devachan. It is thus entirely just, no matter whether the new physical brain is able or not to pick up the lost threads of memory.

So today, in our civilization, we are all under the penalty of our forefather's sins, living in bodies which medical science has shown are sown with diseases of brain and flesh and blood coming in the turbid stream of heredity through the centuries. These disturbances were brought about by ourselves in other centuries, in ignorance, perhaps, of consequences so far-reaching, but that ignorance lessens only the higher moral responsibility and tends to confine the results to physical suffering. This can very well lead, as it often does, to efforts on the part of many reincarnating Egos in the direction of general reform.

It was through a belief in this that the ancients attempted to form and keep up in India a pure family stream such as the highest caste of Brahmin. For they knew that if such a clean family line could be kept existing for many centuries, it would develop the power of repelling Egos on the way to rebirth if they were not in character up to the standard of that stream of life. Thus only teachers by nature, of high moral and spiritual elevation, would come upon the scene to act as regenerators and saviours for all other classes. But under the iron rule of cyclic law this degenerated in time, leaving now only an imitation of the real thing.

A variation of the Eastern story told above is that the advice of the king's counsellors was that the broken stone should be cast at the prince. This was done, and the result was that he was not killed but suffered while the pieces were being thrown. It gives another Karmic law, that is, that a given amount of force of a

Karmic character may be thrown at one or fall upon one at once, in bulk, so to say, or may be divided up into smaller pieces, the sum of which represents the whole mass of Karmic force. And so we see it in life. Men suffer through many years an amount of adverse Karma which, if it were to fall all at once, would crush them. Others for a long time have general good fortune that might unseat the reason if experienced in one day; and the latter happens also, for we know of those who have been destroyed by the sudden coming of what is called great good fortune.

This law is seen also in physics. A piece of glass may be broken at once by a single blow, or the same amount of force put into a number of taps continuously repeated will accomplish the same result and mash the glass. And with the emotions we observe the same law followed by even the most ignorant, for we do not tell bad news at once to the person who is the sufferer, but get at it slowly by degrees; and often when disaster is suddenly heard of, the person who hears it is prostrated. In both cases the sorrow caused is the same, but the method of imparting the news differs. Indeed, in whatever direction we look, this law is observed to work. It is universal, and it ought to be applied to Karma as well as to anything else.

Whether the life we are now living is the net result of the one just preceding is answered by Patanjali in his 8th and 9th aphorisms, Book IV.

"From these works there results, in every incarnation, a manifestation of only those mental deposits which can come to fructification in the environment provided. Although the manifestation of mental deposits may be intercepted by unsuitable environments, differing as to class, place, and time, there is an immediate relation between them, because the memory and the train of self-reproductive thought are identical," and also by other doctrines of the ancients. When a body is taken up, only that sort of Karma which can operate through it will make itself felt. This is what Patanjali means. The "environment" is the body, with the mind, the plastic nature, and the emotions and desires. Hence one may have been great or the reverse in the preceding life, and now have only the environment which will serve for the exhaustion of some Karma left over from lives many incarnations distant. This unexhausted Karma is known as stored-up Karma. It may or may not come into operation now, and it can also be brought out into view by violent effort of the mind leading to such changes as to alter the bodily apparatus and make it equivalent to a new body. But as the majority of men are lazy of mind and nature, they suffer themselves to run with the great family or national stream, and so through one life make no changes of this inner nature. Karma in their cases operates through what Patanjali calls "mental deposits." These are the net results stored from each life by *Manas*. For as body dies, taking brain with it, there can be no storage there nor means

of connecting with the next earth-life; the division known as *Kama* is dissipated or purged away together with astral body at some time before rebirth; astral body retains nothing—as a general rule—for the new life, and the value or summation of those skandhas which belong to *Kama* is concentrated and deposited in *Manas* or the mind. So, when the immortal being returns, he is really *Manas-Buddhi-Atma* seeking a new environment which is found in a new body, *Prana, Kama,* and astral double. Hence, and because under the sway of cyclic law, the reincarnation can only furnish an engine of a horse-power, so to say, which is very much lower than the potential energies stored in *Manas,* and thus there remain unexhausted "mental deposits," or unexhausted Karma. The Ego may therefore be expending a certain line of Karma, always bringing it to similar environments until that class of Karma shall be so exhausted or weakened as to permit another set of "mental deposits" to preponderate, whereupon the next incarnation will be in a different environment which shall give opportunity for the new set of deposits to bring about new or different Karma.

The object that is indicated for life by all this is, to so live and think during each life as to generate no new Karma, or cause for bondage, while one is working off the stock in hand, in order that on closing each life-account one shall have wiped off so much as that permits. The old "mental deposits" will thus gradually move up into action and exhaustion from life to life, at last leaving the man in a condition where he can master all and step into true consciousness, prepared to renounce final reward in order that he may remain with humanity, making no new Karma himself and helping others along the steep road to perfection.

EUSEBIO URBAN.

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# CORRESPONDENCE*
# ON "OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY"

LIFE AND DEATH.

Sir: Will you kindly explain a little more fully what you mean by the following passage in the *Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 36: "So in sleep we are again absorbing and not resisting the Life Energy; when we wake we are throwing it off. But as it exists around us like an ocean in which we swim, our power to throw it off is necessarily limited. Just when we wake we are in equilibrium as to our organs and life; when we fall asleep we are yet more full of life than in the morning. It has exhausted us; it finally kills the body."

If we are throwing off the life energy during the day, how is it that we are more full of life in the evening than in the morning?

STUDENT.

*Manchester, England.*

*This article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for April, 1894.

As said above, our power to throw off the life force accumulated is limited. From this limitation it results that we come to a point when our resistance grows less, just as in the entire life-span a year comes when we begin to go down the hill of life. As it lessens we are drawing near to the hour when the need of sleep will arise. Sleep is that condition of the body needed for procuring the equilibrium between *Jiva* and the body. Equilibrium is about established when we wake, and then the organs begin to resist the further influx of life and to throw off some of what we have taken in. Life constantly presses us just as the electric fluid tries to fill the object placed in the electric field; we cannot resist this pressure every day beyond a certain number of hours, and we fall asleep because Life has disturbed the equilibrium. Resting in sleep, that equilibrium is again established, to be again overcome the next day, or, rather, in the next period of activity. This constant struggle being kept up for years, the bodily organs are not able to stand the wear and tear, and hence the body dies. Thus Life destroys the body. Construe the words "throwing it off" as meaning *resisting it,* and you will dispel the slight confusion arising in a book written so quickly as this one.

ON KARMA.

Sir: 1. On p. 97 of *Ocean* you refer to the treatment of the Red Indians by the Americans, and seem to take for granted that the Indians did not merit such treatment. 2. Again, you say those Indians will be reborn in conquering peoples. If so, would not this process of retaliation go on constantly? 3. Animals seem to suffer and enjoy. If absolute justice rules, how do you account for their case? E. L.

*Ans.* 1. I fully agree that if people go on retaliating or hurting each other, evils will never cease and there will be an endless series of hates. But I do not take it for granted that the Indians did not merit in the eye of Karma as a law what they received. But man is not that law. His duty is compassion. The Americans as a higher race should have treated the Indians kindly instead of robbing and murdering them. Inevitably they will on their next rebirth follow out that practice and influence. But if we know Karma as the law, then we must act in the line of compassion and slowly but surely destroy the hate that exists, replacing it by love. We are not conscious agents of Karma. If we assume that position we assume to judge and execute, and may refuse to take up the good Karma of helping another who has offended. It is just the constant retaliation of men educated under such laws as the Mosaic or any like it, which has created a civilization of retaliation, of selfishness, and egotistical individualism. No. 2 is included in this reply. 3. Animals have Karma, or consequence of act, but they have not man's responsibility. While they seem to suffer and enjoy, it is all without any self-consciousness, and hence is less in itself and less lasting in effect. Their karma is bound up with man, and he is the responsible one and will have to bear the responsibility, although they feel the burden directly. All of the foregoing is, of course, my own opinion.

# WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?*

THIS question has been so often asked, and misconception so widely prevails, that the editors of a journal devoted to an exposition of the world's Theosophy would be remiss were its first number issued without coming to a full understanding with their readers. But our heading involves two further queries: What is the Theosophical Society; and what are the Theosophists? To each an answer will be given.

According to lexicographers, the term *theosophia* is composed of two Greek words—*theos* "god," and *sophos* "wise." So far, correct. But the explanations that follow are far from giving a clear idea of Theosophy. Webster defines it most originally as "a supposed intercourse with God and superior spirits, and consequent attainment of superhuman knowledge, by *physical processes,* as by the theurgic operations of some ancient Platonists, or by the *chemical processes* of the German fire-philosophers."

This, to say the least, is a poor and flippant explanation. To attribute such ideas to men like Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Jamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus—shows either intentional misrepresentation, or Mr. Webster's ignorance of the philosophy and motives of the greatest geniuses of the later Alexandrian School. To impute to those whom their contemporaries as well as posterity styled "theodidaktoi," god-taught—a purpose to develope their psychological, spiritual perceptions by "Physical processes," is to describe them as materialists. As to the concluding fling at the fire-philosophers, it rebounds from them to fall home among our most eminent modern men of science; those, in whose mouths the Rev. James Martineau places the following boast: "matter is all we want; give us atoms alone, and we will explain the universe."

Vaughan offers a far better, more philosophical definition. "A Theosophist," he says—"is one who gives you a theory of God, or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis." In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.

There were Theosophists before the Christian era, notwithstanding that the Christian writers ascribe the development of the Eclectic theosophical system, to the early part of the third century of their Era. Diogenes Laertius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies; and names as its founder an Egyptian Hierophant called Pot-Amun, the name being Coptic and signifying a priest consecrated to Amun, the god of Wisdom. But history shows it revived by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. He and his disciples called themselves "Philaletheians"—lovers of the truth; while others termed them the

*This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* for October, 1879.

"Analogists," on account of their method of interpreting all sacred legends, symbolical myths and mysteries, by rule of analogy or correspondence, so that events which had occurred in the external world were regarded as expressing operations and experiences of the human soul. It was the aim and purpose of Ammonius to reconcile all sects, peoples and nations under one common faith—a belief in one Supreme Eternal, Unknown, and Unnamed Power, governing the Universe by immutable and eternal laws. His object was to prove a primitive system of Theosophy, which at the beginning was essentially alike in all countries; to induce all men to lay aside their strifes and quarrels, and unite in purpose and thought as the children of one common mother; to purify the ancient religions, by degrees corrupted and obscured, from all dross of human element, by uniting and expounding them upon pure philosophical principles. Hence, the Bhuddistic, Vedantic and Magian, or Zoroastrian, systems were taught in the Eclectic theosophical school along with all the philosophies of Greece. Hence also, that pre-eminently Buddhistic and Indian feature among the ancient Theosophists of Alexandria, of due reverence for parents and aged persons; a fraternal affection for the whole human race; and a compassionate feeling for even the dumb animals. While seeking to establish a system of moral discipline which enforced upon people the duty to live according to the laws of their respective countries; to exalt their minds by the research and contemplation of the one Absolute Truth; his chief object in order, as he believed, to achieve all others, was to extract from the various religious teachings, as from a many-chorded instrument, one full and harmonious melody, which would find response in every truth-loving heart.

Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion,* the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization. This "Wisdom" all the old writings show us as an emanation of the divine Principle; and the clear comprehension of it is typified in such names as the Indian Buddh, the Babylonian Nebo, the Thoth of Memphis, the Hermes of Greece; in the appellations, also, of some goddesses—Metis, Neitha, Athena, the Gnostic *Sophia,* and finally—the Vedas, from the word "to know." Under this designation, all the ancient philosophers of the East and West, the Hierophants of old Egypt, the Rishis of Aryavart, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, included all knowledge of things occult and essentially divine. The *Mercavah* of the Hebrew Rabbis, the secular and popular series, were thus designated as only the vehicle, the outward shell which contained the higher esoteric knowledges. The Magi of Zoroaster received instruction and were initiated in the caves and secret lodges of Bactria; the Egyptian and Grecian hierophants had their *apporrheta,* of secret discourses, during which the *Mysta* became *an Epopta*—a Seer.

The central idea of the Eclectic Theosophy was that of a single Supreme Essence, Unknown and *Unknowable*—for—"How could one know the knower?" as enquires *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

Their system was characterized by three distinct features: the theory of the above-named Essence; the doctrine of the human soul —an emanation from the latter, hence of the same nature; and its theurgy. It is this last science which has led the Neo-Platonists to be so misrepresented in our era of materialistic science. Theurgy being essentially the art of applying the divine powers of man to the subordination of the blind forces of nature, its votaries were first termed magicians—a corruption of the word "Magh," signifying a wise, or learned man, and—derided. Skeptics of a century ago would have been as wide of the mark if they had laughed at the idea of a phonograph or a telegraph. The ridiculed and the "infidels" of one generation generally become the wise men and saints of the next.

As regards the Divine essence and the nature of the soul and spirit, modern Theosophy believes now as ancient Theosophy did. The popular *Diu* of the Aryan nations was identical with the *Iao* of the Chaldeans, and even with the Jupiter of the less learned and philosophical among the Romans; and it was just as identical with the *Jahve* of the Samaritans, the *Tiu* or "Tiusco" of the Northmen, the Duw of the Britains, and the Zeus of the Thracians. As to the Absolute Essence, the One and All—whether we accept the Greek Pythagorean, the Chaldean Kabalistic, or the Aryan philosophy in regard to it, it will all lead to one and the same result. The Primeval Monad of the Pythagorean system, which retires into darkness and is itself Darkness (for human intellect) was made the basis of all things; and we can find the idea in all its integrity in the philosophical systems of Leibnitz and Spinoza. Therefore, whether a Theosophist agrees with the Kabala which, speaking of En-Soph propounds the query: "Who, then, can comprehend It, since It is formless, and Non-Existent?"—or, remembering that magnificent hymn from the Rig-Veda (Hymn 129th, Book 10th)—enquires:

> "Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
> Whether his will created or was mute.
> He knows it—or perchance *even He knows not.*"

Or, again, accepts the Vedantic conception of Brahma, who in the *Upanishads* is represented as "without life, without mind, pure," *unconscious*, for—Brahma is "Absolute Consciousness." Or, even finally, siding with the Svabhavikas of Nepaul, maintains that nothing exists but "Svabhavat" (substance or nature) which exists by *itself* without any creator—any one of the above conceptions can lead but to pure and absolute Theosophy. That Theosophy which prompted such men as Hegel, Fichte and Spinoza to take up the labors of the old Grecian philosphers and speculate upon the One Substance—the Deity, the *Divine All* proceeding from the Divine Wisdom—incomprehensible, unknown and *unnamed*—by any ancient or modern religious philosophy, with the exception of Christianity and Mahommedanism. Every Theosophist, then, holding to a theory of the Deity "which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis," may accept any of the above definitions or

belong to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of Theosophy. For the latter is belief in the Deity as the ALL, the source of all existence, the infinite that cannot be either comprehended or known, the universe alone revealing *It,* or, as some prefer it, Him, thus giving a sex to that, to anthropomorphize which is *blasphemy*. True, Theosophy shrinks from brutal materialization; it prefers believing that, from eternity retired within itself, the Spirit of the Deity neither wills nor creates; but that, from the infinite effulgency everywhere going forth from the Great Centre, that which produces all visible and invisible things is but a Ray containing in itself the generative and conceptive power, which, in its turn produces that which the Greeks called *Macrocosm,* the Kabalists *Tikkun* or Adam Kadmon—the archetypal man, and the Aryans *Purusha*, the manifested Brahm, or the Divine Male. Theosophy believes also in the *Anastasis* or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series or changes in the soul* which can be defended and explained on strict philosophical principles; and only by making a distinction between *Paramatma* (transcendental, supreme soul) and *Jivatma* (animal, or conscious soul) of the Vedantins.

To fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. The interior world has not been hidden from all by impenetrable darkness. By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia*—or God-knowledge, which carries the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world. Hence, the "Samadhi," or *Dyan Yog Samadhi,* of the Hindu ascetics; the "Daimonion-photi," or spiritual illumination, of the Neo-Platonists; the "Sidereal confabulation of souls," of the Rosicrucians or Fire-philosophers; and, even the ecstatic trance of mystics and of the modern mesmerists and spiritualists, are identical in nature, though various as to manifestation. The search after man's diviner "self," so often and so erroneously interpreted as individual communion with a personal God, was the object of every mystic, and belief in its possibility seems to have been coeval with the genesis of humanity—each people giving it another name. Thus Plato and Plotinus call "Noetic work" that which the Yogas and the Shrotriya term *Vidya*. "By reflection, self-knowledge and intellectual discipline, the soul can be raised to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty—that is, to the *Vision of God*—this is the *epopteia,*" said the Greeks. "To unite one's soul to the Universal Soul," says Porphyry, "requires but a perfectly pure mind. Through self-contemplation, perfect chastity, and purity of body, we may approach nearer to It, and receive, in that state, true knowledge and wonderful insight." And Swami Dayanund Saraswati, who has read neither Porphyry nor other Greek authors, but who is

*In a series of articles entitled "The World's Great Theosophists" we intend showing that from Pythagoras, who got his wisdom in India, down to our best known modern philosophers, and theosophists—David Hume, and Shelley the English poet—the Spiritists of France included—many believed and yet believe in metempsychosis or reincarnation of the soul; however unelaborated the system of the Spiritists may fairly be regarded.

a thorough Vedic scholar, says in his *Veda Bhashya* (opasna prakaru ank, 9)—"To obtain *Deksha* (highest initiation) and *Yog*, one has to practice according to the rules. . . . The soul in human body can perform the greatest wonders by knowing the Universal Spirit (or God) and acquainting itself with the properties and qualities (occult) of all the things in the universe. A human being (a Dekshit or initiate) can thus *acquire a power of seeing and hearing at great* distances." Finally, Alfred R. Wallace, F. R. S., a spiritualist and yet a confessedly great naturalist, says, with brave candour: "It is 'spirit' that alone feels, and perceives, and thinks—that acquires knowledge, and reasons and aspires . . . there not unfrequently occur individuals so constituted that the spirit can perceive independently of the corporeal organs of sense, or can, perhaps, wholly or partially quit the body for a time and return to it again . . . the spirit . . . communicates with spirit easier than with matter." We can now see how, after thousands of years have intervened between the age of the Gymnosophists* and our own highly civilized era, notwithstanding, or, perhaps, just because of, such an enlightenment which pours its radiant light upon the psychological as well as upon the physical realms of nature, over twenty millions of people to-day believe, under a different form, in those same spiritual powers that were believed in by the Yogins and the Pythagoreans, nearly 3,000 years ago. Thus, while the Aryan mystic claimed for himself the power of solving all the problems of life and death, when he had once obtained the power of acting independently of his body, through the *Atman*—"self," or "soul;" and the old Greeks went in search of *Atmu*—the Hidden one, or the God-Soul of man, with the symbolical mirror of the Thesmophorian mysteries;—so the spiritualists of to-day believe in the faculty of the spirits, or the souls of the disembodied persons, to communicate visibly and tangibly with those they loved on earth. And all these, Aryan Yogis, Greek philosophers, and modern spiritualists, affirm that possibility on the ground that the embodied soul and its never embodied spirit—the real *self*,—are not separated from either the Universal Soul or other spirits by space, but merely by the differentiation of their qualities; as in the boundless expanse of the universe there can be no limitation. And that when this difference is once removed—according to the Greeks and Aryans by abstract contemplation, producing the temporary liberation of the imprisoned Soul; and according to spiritualists, through mediumship—such an union between embodied and disembodied spirits becomes possible. Thus was it that Patanjali's Yogis and, following in their steps, Plotinus, Porphyry and other Neo-Platonists, maintained that in their hours of ecstacy, they had been united to, or rather become as one with, God, several times during the course of their lives. This idea, erroneous as it may seem in its application to the Universal Spirit, was, and is, claimed by too many great philosophers to

*The reality of the Yog-power was affirmed by many Greek and Roman writers, who call the Yogins Indian Gymnosophists; by Strabo, Lucan, Plutarch, Cicero (*Tusculum*), Pliny (vii, 2), etc.

be put aside as entirely chimerical. In the case of the Theodidaktoi, the only controvertible point, the dark spot on this philosophy of extreme mysticism, was its claim to include that which is simply ecstatic illumination, under the head of sensuous perception. In the case of the Yogins, who maintained their ability to see Iswara "face to face," this claim was successfully overthrown by the stern logic of Kapila. As to the similar assumption made for their Greek followers, for a long array of Christian ecstatics, and, finally, for the last two claimants to "God-seeing" within these last hundred years —Jacob Böhme and Swedenborg—this pretension would and *should* have been philosophically and logically questioned, if a few of our great men of science who are spiritualists had had more interest in the philosophy than in the mere phenomenalism of spiritualism.

The Alexandrian Theosophists were divided into neophytes, initiates, and masters, or hierophants; and their rules were copied from the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India. Ammonius obligated his disciples by oath not to divulge his *higher* doctrines, except to those who were proved thoroughly worthy and initiated, and who had learned to regard the gods, the angels, and the demons of other peoples, according to the esoteric *hyponia,* or under-meaning. "The gods exist, but they are not what the *oi polloi,* the uneducated multitude, suppose them to be," says Epicurus. "He is not an atheist who denies the existence of the gods whom the multitude worship, but he is such who fastens on these gods the opinions of the multitude." In his turn, Aristotle declares that of the "Divine Essence pervading the whole world of nature, what are styled the *gods* are simply the first principles."

Plotinus, the pupil of the "God-taught" Ammonius, tells us, that the secret *gnosis* or the knowledge of Theosophy, has three degrees—opinion, science, and *illumination.* "The means or instrument of the first is sense, or perception; of the second, dialectics; of the third, intuition. To the last, reason is subordinate; it is *absolute knowledge,* founded on the identification of the mind with the object known." Theosophy is the exact science of psychology, so to say; it stands in relation to natural, uncultivated mediumship, as the knowledge of a Tyndall stands to that of a school-boy in physics. It develops in man a direct beholding; that which Schelling denominates "a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual;" so that under the influence and knowledge of *hyponia* man thinks divine thoughts, views all things as they really are, and, finally, "becomes recipient of the Soul of the World," to use one of the finest expressions of Emerson. "I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect"—he says in his superb Essay on the *Oversoul.* Besides this psychological, or soul-state, Theosophy cultivated every branch of sciences and arts. It was thoroughly familiar with what is now commonly known as mesmerism. Practical theurgy or "ceremonial magic," so often resorted to in their exorcisms by the Roman Catholic clergy—was discarded by the theosophists. It is but Jamblichus alone who, transcending the other Eclectics,

added to Theosophy the doctrine of Theurgy. When ignorant of the true meaning of the esoteric divine symbols of nature, man is apt to miscalculate the powers of his soul, and, instead of communing spiritually and mentally with the higher, celestial beings, the good spirits (the gods of the theurgists of the Platonic school), he will unconsciously call forth the evil, dark powers, which lurk around humanity—the undying, grim creations of human crimes and vices—and thus fall from *theurgia* (white magic) into *goetia* (or black magic, sorcery.) Yet, neither white, nor black magic are what popular superstition understands by the terms. The possibility of "raising spirits" according to the key of Solomon, is the height of superstition and ignorance. Purity of deed and thought can alone raise us to an intercourse "with the gods" and attain for us the goal we desire. Alchemy, believed by so many to have been a spiritual philosophy as well as a physical science, belonged to the teachings of the theosophical school.

It is a noticeable fact that neither Zoroaster, Buddha, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Confucius, Socrates, nor Ammonius Saccas, committed anything to writing. The reason for it is obvious. Theosophy is a double-edged weapon and unfit for the ignorant or the selfish. Like every ancient philosophy, it has its votaries among the moderns; but, until late in our own days, its disciples were few in numbers, and of the most various sects and opinions. "Entirely speculative, and founding no schools, they have still exercised a silent influence upon philosophy; and no doubt, when the time arrives, many ideas thus silently propounded may yet give new directions to human thought"—remarks Mr. Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie IX° . . . himself a mystic and a Theosophist, in his large and valuable work, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (articles *Theosophical Society of New York* and *Theosophy*, p. 731).* Since the days of the fire-philosophers, they had never formed themselves into societies, for, tracked like wild beasts by the Christian clergy, to be known as a Theosophist often amounted, hardly a century ago, to a death-warrant. The statistics show that, during a period of 150 years, no less than 90,000 men and women were burned in Europe for alleged witchcraft. In Great Britain only, from A. D. 1640 to 1660, but twenty years, 3,000 persons were put to death for compact with the "Devil." It was but late in the present century—in 1875—that some progressed mystics and spiritualists, unsatisfied with the theories and explanations of Spiritualism, started by its votaries, and finding that they were far from covering the whole ground of the wide range of phenomena, formed at New York, America, an association which is now widely known as the Theosophical Society. And now, having explained what is Theosophy, we will, in a separate article, explain what is the nature of our society, which is also called the "Universal Brotherhood of Humanity."

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**The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism, and Biography.* Edited by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie IX (Cryptonymus) Hon. Member of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, No. 2, Scotland. New York, J. W. Bouton, 706, Broadway, 1877.

# ON THE LOOKOUT

Science seems to be accelerating rather than retarding its present headlong progress towards Occultism. The commentator need no longer search in the by-paths of thought for the obscure evidences of a scientific change of heart nor snatch at the straws with which at one time he had to content himself. Magazines and newspapers, the pulpit and the platform, offer him with both hands all the material that he needs. He can now choose the best rather than merely tolerate the worst.

Take for example the article on "After Death—What?" contributed by Dr. James Thompson Bixby to *Harper's Monthly Magazine.* It would be too much to expect a statement of the whole theosophical philosophy within the compass of such an article as this, but at least we must admit that Dr. Bixby did the best he could within his spatial limitations and of course without mention of the fatal word Theosophy. It seems that the modern editor can now tolerate anything so long as it bears a conventional label.

Dr. Bixby tells us that Materialism has broken its own back. It has discovered so much about matter that it is now compelled to believe in something that is not matter. A few years ago it believed firmly that solid matter was—solid, and now it finds that solid matter is anything but solid. He tells us of "the well-established gaps between the atoms, even in living tissues," and he asks how the atoms are able to bridge these gaps and so to merge their consciousnesses so as to "unite thought with thought, to compare their sensations, to link premises with conclusions, to recall the experiences of long-departed fellow molecules, to concentrate their isolated rudimentary sensations in some magical chemical retort into a full and true consciousness"? The materialistic conception of consciousness was plausible so long as the atoms were supposed to be in contact, but they are not in contact. They are vastly far apart. Indeed the space between the atoms in the human brain is far greater than the space that is occupied by the atoms.

Now just here there is a point that causes the theosophical commentator —being only human—to exult exceedingly. The discontinuity of matter, that is to say the space between the atoms, has just been discovered by Science. Dr. Bixby says so. It was undreamed of a few years ago. But it was well known to the author of the *Secret Doctrine,* although she said that "to Physical Science this will be an absurdity." On page 553 of Volume I she says that a wooden or a stone block seems to be motionless and impenetrable to all intents and purposes but nevertheless "its particles are in ceaseless eternal vibration which is so rapid that to the physical eye the body seems absolutely devoid of motion; and the spatial distances between those particles in their vibratory motion is . . . as great as that which separates snowflakes or drops of rain. But to physical Science this will be an absurdity." Sir Oliver Lodge says that the atoms are separated far more widely than this. He says that the electrons are like a thousand grains of sand thrown into St. Peter's Cathedral. He says moreover that they are spatially related to one another as are the planets of the solar system, so that here we have Science making its little contribution to what we know of the Law of Correspondences, for which *Te Deum Laudamus.*

But Dr. Bixby has still something more to say to us. He tells us that the space between the atoms is occupied in the human organism by an "architectonic psychic body" which is released by the dissolution of the atoms, that is to say by death. This architectonic psychic body is the habitat of the Soul, and it may be said to correspond with the prenatal envelopes known as the amnion, the allantois, the seolemna, and the placenta. If these prenatal bodies have been successively formed and discarded why, he asks, should not the present body be similarly of temporary use. If these earlier bodies were provisional to a higher organism why may not the present body be so? He asks further, "may not the vital formative power have turned its course toward preparing within an invisible etheric organism for the next onward metamorphosis?" Yes, Dr. Bixby says this very thing, and in the immaculate pages of *Harper's.* And he says more than this. He asks us to witness a constant process of human reincarnation, although of course he does not mention the word reincarnation which would never do for *Harper's.* What

he does say is this:—"In this psychic ether-organism within the material organism there is present already during life a soul-body, a non-atomic substance, an active, coherent, continuous, and constructive energy not liable to be destroyed or rendered powerless by the decomposition of the material body. When the earthly end comes to the body, this psychic etheric organism may betake itself to some more favorable environment and may again clothe itself with a new physical body."

Now what are we to say to this except that the theosophical lecturer is in a fair way to become a supernumerary? And yet there are those who ask if Theosophy has made any impression upon the thought of the world. It may be said in all seriousness that twenty-five years ago Dr. Bixby would have been in danger of the lunatic asylum on no better evidence than the article that is now welcomed to the pages of a conventional magazine. And that article will be universally read, certainly not without interest, but without a ripple of protest or denunciation. So the world does actually move.

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Some time ago Dr. J. Godfrey Raupert made a sensation in the English scientific world by his contribution to the study of insanity. Dr. Raupert is an expert on the subject of insanity, so far as anyone can be an expert on such a subject, which perhaps is not very far. And it was Dr. Raupert's opinion that the present increase in mental disease is largely due to the pursuit of psychism which is now not only scientifically popular but which has become a craze throughout fashionable society. It was the kind of psychism which used to be known as "sitting for development" and which includes crystal gazing, telepathic experiments, and perhaps other varieties still more questionable.

Dr. Raupert had been sceptical as to the reality of these phenomena but that scepticism had been removed by personal investigation. He gives us some of the results of this investigation, but with that we need not concern ourselves. Doubtless it would prove interesting to psychic researchers and curiosity hunters of that rather low type, but it is enough now to say that he was entirely and fully satisfied not only with the genuineness of the occurrences but also with the gravity of their effects upon nervous or unbalanced persons. And for this reason he issued his warning in an English magazine and it was received passively even by a medical fraternity which is getting a little shy of its wholesale denials of easily proved facts.

And now we have another communication from Dr. Raupert, this time in the columns of the London *Daily Chronicle*. Pursuing his previous text on the dangers of a reckless pursuit of psychic phenomena he tells us of an important book just issued in Germany by Professor von Schrenck-Notzing on "The Phenomena of Materialization." It seems that the German savant, like Dr. Raupert himself, was led to an investigation of materialization, not that he might understand the thing itself, but that he might expose the fraud which he assumed to underlie it. But he discovered a good deal more than he had foreseen and he now writes this big book to announce that materializations do actually occur, and to relate all the details of his investigation which has extended over a period of some years. He equipped himself, says Dr. Raupert, with a dozen photographic cameras, and with all the other instruments of precision that might be useful, and the result is this confession "that the phenomena of materialization are an objective fact of science and that, so far, science has found itself utterly unable to discover the cause which is at work on their production."

Now with that humble desire to be of service which has always distinguished these pages it may be said that if the learned professor will turn to the writings of H. P. Blavatsky—which can be done secretly—he will find there a minute explanation of all the phenomena of the kind that have ever been reported. He can then, if he so desire, advance as his own the solution offered by H. P. Blavatsky, and so obtain for himself the applause that should have been given to her. Possibly the professor is too honorable to take such a course but if so he will show more delicate scruples than very many of his confreres who have not hesitated to do this very thing, not once only, but many times.

Indeed, Dr. Raupert himself, who thus brings this volume to our attention, is quick to suppose that orthodox scientists will be quick to do something of this kind and to advance as their own discovery a phenomenon that has been a matter of common knowledge among students for the last half century and that can be found described in books thousands of years old. Dr. Raupert says, "That science is the last to study and acknowledge phenomena which have been known to large groups of humbler and 'unscientific' enquirers for many years past is, of course a small matter. With that accommodation of memory which so often characterizes modern scientific thought, scientific men will no doubt quietly ignore this fact, and parade phenomena of this kind as their own discoveries—as the result of their own patient investigations."

That, of course, is precisely what they will do. That is what they have always done. The teachings of the *Secret Doctrine,* for example, have been confirmed in a dozen surprising ways since the date of its publication, but in no single instance has credit been given to its author.

Dr. Raupert himself is inclined to deplore the access of popularity which this volume is certain to give to an unwise psychic research. He points out that it is dangerous to the medium, that it is practically a process of psychic vivisection, and that it is utterly useless for the purpose of demonstrating the survival of the individuality. These phenomena, he says, are certainly not caused by the dead, nor do they prove that the dead are alive. He asks:—"can we reasonably believe that the spirits of the dead, our departed relatives and friends, will avail themselves of means so repulsive and so disastrous to the living in order to furnish evidence of the fact that they still exist?" Perhaps it is well that the question should be asked and that the protest should be made, That, at least, is all that can be done except to indicate to those that have eyes to see that an illumination has already been thrown upon these phenomena and that it is not within the power of science to increase it.

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Just at present there is more than one problem for the hereditist to solve although he can hardly be congratulated upon any great success so far attained. The first to be mentioned is that furnished by Mr. S. Ramanujan, a young Hindu, who has just been sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, in order that he may pursue his mathematical studies. His tutor says of him that "his mathematical education is rather a mystery and he is not learned in any other subject. He wrote to me explaining who he was and sent a large number of mathematical theorems which he had proved. There were a great many very remarkable results. His theorems were all in pure mathematics, particularly in the theory of numbers and the theory of elliptic functions. While many of them were quite new, others had been anticipated by writers of whom he had never heard, and of whose work he was quite innocent. That is the wonderful thing; he discovered for himself a great number of things which the leading mathematicians of the last hundred years, such as Cauchy and Jacobi, had added to the knowledge of schoolmen."

The second case is that of the young Italian boy, six years of age, who has been chosen to conduct the great symphony concerts in London. He has been chosen, not because of the sensation involved, but for the simple reason that he is the most competent musician available for such a purpose.

No doubt these human phenomena will occasion a battle royal between the hereditists and psychic researchers, who are now numerous enough and respectable enough to demand a hearing. The hereditists will say that genius has in each case been transmitted from ancestors or that it is the result of a combination of the characteristics of ancestors, such characteristics not being themselves genius, but producing genius after transmission and combination. They will be unable to tell us precisely what are the characteristics in ancestors that produce genius in descendants, and in fact they will resent being asked such a question, but they will be none the less certain that their theory is the correct one and intolerant of any opposition. On the other hand the psychic researchers will assure us that this and all other genius is no more than the stored memory of the subconscious self which is recalling the fruits of past experiences. But they cannot tell us when these experiences could have been acquired.

And so we may justifiably wonder how long it will be before some modern philosopher, some Bergson without the Bergsonian modesty, "discovers" for us the fact of reincarnation as the solution of the problem of genius. There need be no doubt that such a philosopher will presently make his appearance. Or perhaps it will be a theologian, who will then assert, and quite truly, that reincarnation is an essential part of Christianity and that it has been allowed to sink from sight only through motives of expediency. Indeed there are Roman Catholic priests who say this now, as the writer himself can testify.

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It seems that Saul also is among the prophets. In response to an appeal for a universal prayer for the Christianization of China a clergyman writes as follows to an English newspaper:—"May I suggest that we all pray with heart and soul that the Chinese may be preserved from the curse of the West? Let us and all westerns pause for a few moments in the hideous battle of modern life and look around at our present state of sham civilization after centuries of enlightenment and so-called 'progress'; then earnest indeed will be our prayers that China and all other nations not yet under the 'curse' may be saved from so ghastly a farce."

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It seems that a great temple of occultism is now being built by Dr. Rudolf Steiner in Switzerland at a cost of nearly half a million dollars. Symbolism and mysticism, we are told, are the keynotes of the architectural design. There are seven pillars to represent the seven sacred planets, and each column is made symbolically of a different kind of wood. There is to be a vast amphitheatre, and we are told that sculptors, architects, painters, and designers, all occultists, and all giving their services freely, have assembled to aid in the work of construction.

This ought to be good news for the weary and the heavy laden, who will doubtless be duly impressed by the magnificence and the cost of the new building. But there may be some who will regret that the word Theosophy should be associated with the undertaking, and who will remember the simple philosophy of life promulgated by the founders of the Theosophical Society and recommended for the aid of humanity. But is it actually for the sake of humanity that this building in all its splendor is being erected? Is it expected to help in spreading abroad the main theosophical principles that were intended for the many rather than the few, and that were designed to make life better worth living and death better worth dying?

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It is refreshing to find that popular magazines are beginning to tell the truth about missionary work, and the truth is the last thing that missionary work will welcome. Thus in the *Los Angeles Graphic* we find an article by Eleanor Maddock on "The 'heathen' from his Standpoint." The article is a good one, and it would be pleasant to quote from it at length, but a single selection must suffice. Speaking of the convert the author says:—"But he has been observing the 'sahiblogue' and their ways, so the first thing he does when he becomes a Christian is to add profanity to his vocabulary, to get drunk and eat meat, the religion of Hindu and Mahommedan alike prohibiting the use of alcohol in any form, the former prohibiting the eating of beef, the latter of pig, so that the demoralized condition of the convert is readily apparent. It is an exceedingly rare thing for an educated and high caste Hindu or Mahommedan to become converted, and there are comparatively few missions in the northern part of India, most of the activities being confined to the Madras Presidency and Burma, although in Lucknow there is a very flourishing mission school, and in conversation with an influential and wealthy merchant there, he said:—'It is a very good school and we allow our women to attend for educational purposes and the acquiring of English, for which we pay, but we forbid them taking any of the religious teachings; our sons we send to colleges in England and other countries.' This is a fair sample of what the Church of England Missionary Society considers a well attended school, and therefore one yielding a goodly harvest of 'brands snatched from the burning.'"